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# Treasured Garments: Exploring Value in the Wardrobe

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PhD 2019



# **Treasured Garments: Exploring Value in the Wardrobe**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the Manchester  
Metropolitan University for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

Manchester Fashion Institute  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
2019

## **Abstract**

This thesis aimed to determine how garments become treasured: the nature of those garments, and the process by which they achieve and retain their status, viewed within the spectrum of ways of valuing clothing. By privileging the wearer's view of garments this thesis reveals a depth of emotional attachment to clothing via its material and sensory experience that impact subsequent valuing. This thesis contributes to the importance of fashion studies, through exploring the multiple and overlapping reasons why we wear and keep garments. The methodology expands the focus of wardrobe studies by concentrating attention on single garments in relation to the wardrobe.

Wardrobe interviews were combined with garment analysis to deeply investigate particular garments, then used to open up attitudes to the rest of the wardrobe. A sample of five women and five men aged between 21 – 44, living in close proximity within a London neighbourhood were recruited based on location. Acknowledging the small sample, this study aimed for depth of understanding rather than generalisability. The evidence was analysed thematically under the dominant themes of acquisition, materiality, emotion, narrative and value. The importance of attachment clothing in life transitions, and in preserving intergenerational family connections is identified, as is the role of materiality in emotional connections manifest in practices of wear, care, alteration and repair. Treasuring was found to be a process of increasing singularization understood in terms of uniqueness and irreplaceability. The findings were situated within a growing body of wardrobe studies and studies of special possessions, framed by theories of exchange and value.

New categories of intergenerational clothing connections are put forward such as 'requested' and 'taken' in which the receiver is the active party in clothing movement. It also offers the male perspective on attachment clothing. This research recommends expanding the term 'investment value' to include elements of the personal economy and rejecting ideas of nostalgic or sentimental relations, to see treasured garments as symbolically dense. A dichotomy between worn and unworn attachment clothing was identified in the literature. In this study, the majority of the garments that were treasured were also worn, creating a dilemma between wearing and wearing out. 'Conscious wearing' is proposed to describe how the participants rationed the use of a garment in order to preserve its lifespan and extend their enjoyment of wearing. 'Emotional comforting' is suggested as an expansion of the ways in which clothes can provide comfort and be described as comfortable.

## Acknowledgements

Behind this achievement is an assembly of others who have offered their time, energy, support and guidance, for which I am incredibly grateful.

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Alison Slater, Dr Philip Sykas and Dr Kathryn Brownbridge for guiding me through the research journey with expert advice, comments and patience. In particular, Alison for reading the final draft while on maternity leave, Philip for demanding clarity of thought and expression, Kathy for asking the tough questions. I couldn't have asked for a better supervisory team, they always made time to answer questions, read work and give feedback.

My thanks also go to Manchester Fashion Institute/ Manchester Metropolitan University for funding this research, without which I would not have been able to undertake doctoral study. To the administrative team in the Faculty Research Degrees Office for making sure things ran smoothly.

To my interviewees for giving up time in their busy London lives and having the trust to let people they don't know well into their homes and wardrobes. To my friends, Lizzie and Gavin, for assisting with the filming of the interviews.

Professor Jim Aulich for delivering the researcher training programme with his unique wit and wisdom. Dr Tom Brock for teaching me the philosophy of social science methods. Dr Myna Trustram for her transformative writing course, which gave me tools I have used throughout my PhD and will continue to use for the rest of my life.

To Philippa, who I met on the first day and have been friends with since, thanks for the pep talks, the text messages and sharing the PhD journey with me.

To everyone in Righton PhD workspace, Mor, Charlotte, Phoebe, Sasha and Liz, it was a pleasure to share an office, borrow books, discuss our progress and support each other.

My husband Thomas Henri, for his endless support, love and a listening ear. He told me I could do it when I didn't believe I could, listened to my rambling thoughts and has never complained when I worked evenings and weekends. To my mother, Stella Wood who spent her working life writing, editing and checking long reports for the local council, for spending some of her retirement proofreading this thesis. To my father, John Wood, who would have been proud of me.

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# 1. Introduction

*"I'm interested in clothes people  
want, covet, desire, wear, use, love, tear, soil...  
Clothes mean nothing until someone lives in them."*  
- Marc Jacobs, 2008<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Introduction

This research seeks to understand the phenomenon of treasured garments, what these garments mean, how people become attached to them, and how this relationship develops over the period of wearing and keeping. The origins of the research began in wonderings about what an exhibition of clothing organised by personal value would look like. Instead of showing clothes that were historically or culturally significant, or part of a designer's oeuvre, such a display would privilege the clothing that individuals wanted to preserve and the reasons they had for doing so. The questions this raised were: Why do we value some clothes above others? What is it about a garment that makes it difficult or impossible to part with? How does our relationship with these garments affect our everyday life? Does the answer lie in the physical garment, the emotional connection with it, monetary value or some broader notion of value—a value that reaches beyond market considerations?

A term that encompasses all these elements without directing too strongly to one or the other is 'treasured'. Treasure can be valuable in a material, economic sense, but is used metaphorically, for example 'buried treasure', to indicate cultural or personal importance as well as in an emotional sense, as in 'treasured memories'. With regard

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Jacobs is quoted in Rickey, M. (2008) *Marc Jacobs, a fashion force to be reckoned with*. 26<sup>th</sup> May. The Independent. [Online] [accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019]  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/features/marc-jacobs-a-fashion-force-to-be-reckoned-with-834246.html>

to clothing, the term 'treasured' implies the emotional connection, but often accompanied by a physical investment in keeping and shielding from harm. It is not just that a treasured garment is kept, but an active relationship is carried on that is usually reflected in accompanying notions of value.

Over the last twenty years, a number of publications have investigated the personal, emotional relationship between women and their clothes. Often in the form of memoir, recorded conversations, or creative fiction, these texts show a desire to delve beneath the surface of fashion to understand the deep connections people have with garments and how meaning arises in them. This attachment to clothes is reflected in titles such as, *A Second Skin: Women Write About Clothes* (Dunseath, 1998), *The Thoughtful Dresser* (Grant, 2009), and *Worn Stories* (Spivack, 2014). These books seek recognition of the personal, social and cultural importance of clothing to women's everyday lives. Grant (2009: 4-5) links her interest in fashion to her interest in people, saying she is "curious about all our human dimensions." The importance of clothing as objects of emotion and affect is strongly present in these works, but there is no attempt at theorization of these relationships and how they are formed.

These non-academic accounts find their importance in their ability to communicate the 'wearer's view', a perspective which has been overlooked in academic writing around fashion and dress (Tseëlon, 2012). Lou Taylor referred to "one of the great voids of Dress History" as "it's failure to examine emotional responses to clothing and appearance" (2002: 4). This absence is in some ways unsurprising because this kind of emotional evidence is often unavailable and, for historical examples, the wearers of the garments are unknown or have passed away. While historical studies do not offer the opportunity to record such evidence, contemporary studies can address this gap.

The wearer's view is also notably absent from approaches to fashion as language (Laurie, 1981), as semiotic system (Barthes, 1990) or as communication (Barnard, 2002). These methods privilege the viewer as interpreter, asking what clothes say about a person in the eyes of others, they are about the public presentation and

communication of the self. Marc Jacobs' insistence that the meaning of clothes comes from repeated wearing reacts against the sense that clothing's meaning is overwhelmingly determined by the designer or the public — from the outside in. Rather than considering what people might be outwardly communicating with their clothing, this research focused on the inward meanings of garments to their owners.

Buckley and Clark (2012) claim that Fashion Studies and Fashion History have focused disproportionately on the “avant-garde, the extraordinary and the unusual, especially regarding origination and design” (18), failing to recognize fashion and the everyday with its “intimate places – the wardrobe or the sewing box [... and] commonplace social interactions” (22). This highlights the need for more studies that privilege the ‘wearer’s view’ of everyday dress. Here, the concept of everyday dress is taken in contrast to high fashion, and can include ordinary fashion for special occasion wear.

The relationship between person and clothing in the private space of the home rather than the public space of wearing is put into focus by the wardrobe study. Wardrobe studies are a method used increasingly in Fashion and Material Culture research, especially when the focus is on everyday dress. Else Skjold (2016) posits that the wardrobe “actually stands in a sharp contrast to the interest in the spectacular, the trend-leading and the glamorous which has shaped much ‘fashion thinking’ —often ignoring the logics and practices of the majority of people when they go about getting dressed every day” (136). Fletcher and Klepp (2017) note that wardrobe studies “focus on the physical, material aspects of wardrobes as an important way to offset the preference in qualitative interviews [...] to intangible aspects and specifically to language and linguistic utterances” (10). Here, it is argued that emotional connections are closely linked to material elements of garments and the wardrobe interview offers an opportunity to capture both material and immaterial aspects of clothing. For these reasons, this research was framed as a wardrobe study.

Other wardrobe studies have looked at why women keep clothing, but they have focused on clothing that is no longer worn and the wardrobe as a collective grouping



(Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007). Key investigations have shown that garments are kept beyond their useful life for a variety of reasons pertaining to identity (Banim & Guy, 2001; Woodward, 2007) and value (Bye & McKinney, 2008; Cluver, 2008; Hertz, 2011). Treasured garments, by contrast, can be worn or unworn, and highlight the significance of individual items within the wardrobe. Hence, although this research builds upon previous wardrobe studies, it departs from them in its emphasis on the worn garment and the place of individual garments within the wider wardrobe.

## **1.2 Aims of the Research**

A set of aims was devised to guide this research:

1. To explore why individuals treasure garments, what those garments are and how they became treasured.
2. To examine the process by which treasured garments achieve and retain their status in comparison with other systems of valuing clothing.
3. To establish the extent to which treasured garments and their owners' biographies map onto existing literature around retained clothing.
4. To contribute to theoretical debates about how the relationship between materiality, identity, emotion affect personal value in the wardrobe.

Aim one addresses what treasured garments are, as there is little fashion literature on special clothing possessions. Aim two situates treasuring in theories of value and valuing. Aim three situates treasured garments within wardrobe studies and research on retained clothing and biography, while aim four allows a synthesis of themes in the research.

This research makes use of anthropological theories of value and exchange in order to better understand how people treasure garments. It draws on wardrobe studies within fashion studies, but also upon material culture and consumption studies. The literature of consumption has examined 'cherished' (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) or 'special' (Price et al., 2000; Richins, 1994a) possessions. Similarly,

there is literature in psychology around attachment objects (Dittmar, 1992; Masuch & Hefferon, 2018), but there is little work on clothing specifically. This research uses these literatures to inform the work on treasured garments. Similar to the findings of wardrobe studies, special possessions and attachment objects were found to be closely related to identity, personal meaning and conceptions of value.

### **1.3 Scope and Definitions**

This research is unusual within its subject area for looking at a group that is not usually studied. Research has been dominated by studies of youth and of older people, or sometimes a wide age range, and especially by studies of women. The recruitment often attracted people with some prior interest in the subject. Here I sought a method that might invite wider participation and broaden the scope of participation. The people interviewed for this research live in adjacent blocks of flats in South East London. Recruitment was based on this narrow geography alone, so broadening the scope in one sense meant narrowing in another. The resultant participants turned out to be largely from the millennial generation, aged from 21 – 45, with equal female and male representation, as well as differing sexuality. Importantly, they included people who did not necessarily have a pre-existing interest in fashion or clothing.

The choice of the term ‘treasured’ has been discussed above; the following definitions are also adopted in this thesis. The term ‘fashion’ opens contested ground, with dress, clothing, costume and fashion loosely referring to a shared area of interest, but representing opposed perspectives. Dress is seen as more comprehensive than clothing, taking in body adornments that are important to cross-cultural research. Costume denotes an entire appearance and has been applied mainly in studies of folk dress and performance arts; opponents of the term feel that calling dress ‘costume’ separates it from everyday life. Lise Skov and Marie Riegels Melchior (2008: 4) argue “Scholars of fashion are not interested in the universal phenomenon of dress, but in cultural and historical developments in Europe and the West” (See also Taylor, 2013 for a summary). Because this thesis

deals with a specific cultural phenomenon in Britain and involves the concept of changing styles, fashion is felt an appropriate designation in which to situate the study. In its more narrow usage in the thesis, 'fashion' is taken to mean the prevailing style (Stallybrass & Jones, 2000) at the time a garment was first acquired or worn. However, fashion is also employed more broadly in the sense of fashion studies. The terms 'item of clothing' or 'garment' are used to refer to specific pieces.

In common usage, the term wardrobe has a dual meaning: it can be a piece of furniture or built-in closet in which clothing is stored, or a term to denote all the clothing one person owns. It is the latter use that is adopted here. It is recognised that there are a range of places in which clothing is stored; drawers, suitcases, storage boxes, hooks and rails were all found in the course of the research. While, for the most part, the wardrobe is an area of personal use, it can be shared (especially by couples), and even communal, such as an entrance coat rack.

The term 'value' has a wide range of defining characteristics, with numerous systems or registers of value. It can be thought of in economic terms, in non-economic terms or a mixture of both. Value has been described as a 'fluid element' (Boradkar, 2012) and "radically contingent, being neither an inherent property of objects nor an arbitrary projection of subjects, but rather the product of the dynamics of an economic system" (Herrnstein-Smith, 1983: 11). Barbara Herrnstein-Smith includes personal economy in her version of an economic system, the biological, psychological, material and experiential (1983: 12). It is this personal economy that is the focus of value in this research. It is part of the aims of the study to understand the different systems of value that apply to treasured clothing, the literature review includes texts discussing value, and the findings on value are fully explored in Chapter 9.

#### **1.4 Chapter Structure**

A literature review (Chapter 2) considers the importance of materiality and material culture literature to the topic at hand. The literature of consumption studies and the use of an individual's relationship to possessions in general are reviewed and a link

between personal meaning and value is established. The literature on special clothing such as wedding dresses and items of favourite clothing is examined. The review then moves to empirical wardrobe studies, in order to understand what has been found in relation to clothing in the wardrobe; it also touches on storage, care, and position of clothing in the wardrobe. Theories of value and valuing are drawn on from anthropology and social science to inform the study.

Chapter 3, Methodology, sets out the research design, rationale and approach to data collection. It explains the selection of wardrobe interviews and garment analysis for this research. The garment analysis was adapted from a method used in dress history and museum studies in order to engender a closer interaction and consideration of the material garment. The chapter discusses the issues surrounding methodology in fashion research, the lack of a methodological canon for fashion studies, and goes on to explore 'Wardrobe Studies' as an emerging method for fashion researchers. It explains the participant recruitment strategy of 'the street', a method used by Miller and Woodward (2012), in which participants are recruited by location. This chapter also describes preparatory studies including an autoethnography, pilot studies and a workshop. It details the decisions made around interview questions, the interview schedule and how the recruitment progressed. The choice of an abductive approach to the evidence is also explained.

Chapter 4, Participants and their Treasured Garments, provides a bridge between the methodology and presentation of evidence. This chapter introduces the participants and findings related to the participants as a group. It describes their attitudes to fashion, clothing, acquisition and divestment. The chapter introduces the themes and concepts that are discussed in more detail later in the research. Lastly, it provides a sketch of each participant and a description of their treasured garments.

Chapter 5 to Chapter 9 present and discuss findings. Examples from the research are situated in the relevant literature, discussing their relevance to current understanding. The first of these is Chapter 5, Acquisition, which details how treasured garments were acquired and positions this in relation to systems of

exchange. The differences between gifts and commodities, purchasing new or second hand, and the significance of prior owners are discussed. The method of acquisition was found to be significant in subsequent treasuring. There was a wide variety of informal exchange that was not sufficiently captured by the word 'gift' and the giver and receiver relationship was often blurred. Therefore, different types of clothing movement within families such as hand-me-downs, and requested garments are discussed in relation to literature on formal and informal exchange (Laitala and Klepp, 2017, 2018), exchange value, and the feeling of 'getting a bargain'.

The next two chapters, Chapter 6, Materiality, and Chapter 7, Emotion, are closely related; they explore the interplay between the material garment and the emotions or affects they have on the owner. Chapter 6 examines the physical garment and the material it is made from, the way the garment looks, feels and smells, and how all of these impact on emotion and treasuring. It considers the literature of material culture and properties of materials in relation to the findings of this study. This chapter also explores living with garments; the physical processes they go through such as wear, care, repair and storage. It examines what people do with their treasured garments, how they do these things and if treasuring impacts these practices. Here, the study found a number of tensions, between wearing and wearing out, repairing and leaving unaltered and ways to care for garments.

Where the Materiality chapter begins with the garment, the Emotion chapter (7) begins with the participant and how they feel about and in their garments. Feelings of love, joy and comfort are explored as reasons for both wearing and keeping. These findings are discussed in relation to literature relating to psychological studies of happy garments (Smith & Yates, 2018). The chapter notes that a discussion of emotions often leads to conceptions of identity construction; theories of affect are considered in relation to treasured garments to provide a counterpoint. Comfort and confidence emerged as significant feelings about treasured garments and these are discussed in relation to Miller and Woodward's (2012) analysis of comfort. There is

engagement with issues concerning sustainability, questioning if loved clothes really do last.

Chapter 8, Biography and Narrative, discusses the importance of life transitions, the connection to self and the connection to others in treasured garments. Treasured garments are discussed in relation to 'sacred' and transitional objects. They are discussed in relation to Friese's (2001) study on wedding dresses and Winnicott's (1953) concept of transitional objects. Garments acquired from family members often provided the chance to attach an individual identity and a family identity within one garment. There is discussion of the relationship of loved garments to identity (2005) and the extended self (Belk 1988). The chapter questions how treasured garments represent both 'me and not me'. Finally, there is a discussion of how treasured garments allow participants to tell the story of themselves and of their garments.

Chapter 9, Value, brings together the previous four chapters and asks how the conception of value is arrived at. It begins with economic forms of value and 'investment value'. The chapter then examines non-economic forms of value and meaning, beginning with use value and considering the importance of wearing to treasuring. This leads to a discussion of the appropriateness of the terms 'sentimental' or 'nostalgic' to describe treasured garments. Kopytoff's (1986) theory of 'singularization' is examined with reference to concepts of material uniqueness and emotional irreplaceability. Treasured garments connect past, present and future, this finding is situated within Weiner's writing on transcendental value (Weiner, 1984). The chapter ends by proposing the reasons that garments are treasured in terms of value and valuing.

The final chapter, Conclusions and Contributions to Knowledge, reflects on the experience of the research and the methods used. It offers conclusions to the thesis and synthesis of the findings discussed in the separate chapters. It also covers the limitations of the study, presents the contributions to knowledge made by the study, and suggests directions for future research. The contributions to knowledge centre

around the importance of acquisition and alterations, intergenerational clothing connections, the link between materiality and emotion, an identification of the strategy of 'conscious wearing' to prolong the life of treasured garments, a re-thinking of the relevance of comfort in clothing and an alternative way of thinking about sentimental value.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research seeks to understand the phenomenon of treasured garments, what these garments mean, how people become attached to them, and how this relationship develops over the period of keeping. The term 'treasured' implies an emotional connection, often accompanied by a physical investment in keeping and shielding from harm. It is not just that a treasured garment is kept, but the changing relationship with the item reflected in accompanying notions of value, that helps to mark out the treasuring process.

The study of clothing is multidisciplinary, encompassing dress history, fashion theory, sociology, anthropology, material culture, psychology and consumption studies; each address the role of clothing in people's lives and experience, its meanings and values. After briefly examining literature that aided in framing the research, this literature review looks at relevant matter across the stated fields, arranging the discussion thematically.

As clothing has a material presence, first there is a consideration of the importance of materiality, the engagement with the physical material and sensual nature of dress and how this has been theorized by researchers in fashion theory and material culture. Next, there is a consideration of the term 'treasured' alongside related terms such as 'special', 'cherished', 'inalienable' and 'favourite' to describe an individual's relationship to a possession, drawing largely upon consumption studies. These texts refer to cherished possessions, with clothing simply another type of possession.

The review then considers the findings of investigations that can be loosely grouped as 'wardrobe studies'. Many of these studies focus on kept but no longer worn clothing, which sets up a dichotomy between the 'worn' and the 'unworn', implying that there is something unusual about keeping clothes that are unworn, especially those that may remain permanently so. Research findings that tie kept clothing to



identity and value, or provide information on storage practices and the organization of clothing within the wardrobe are more straightforward. Current cultural norms encourage people to discard unworn clothing to create space and order, and the decluttering 'movement' also has its own literature focused on the wardrobe.

This review then shifts toward the theoretical to explore themes of identity, emotion and value. The construction of and communication of identity in relation to clothing is examined. The review includes popular non-fiction accounts of the personal relationship between women and dress for what these have to say about memory, meaning and value in relation to clothing. This literature highlights that narrative is one of the ways in which writers have attempted to untangle the meanings, emotions, and identities present in items of clothing.

The role of memory in formulating personal value and constructing biographical narratives through material engagement with an object is explored in order to gain a better understanding of the process by which objects acquire and retain personal value. The reasons that individuals designate a garment as 'most treasured', is at heart, a judgment of value. Economic registers such as use-value, exchange value (Marx, [1867] 1990) and the process of commoditization and singularization using personal meanings (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986) are examined in relation to dress. Other registers of value such as hedonic value, public value, private value and sentimental value that focus on meaning are also taken into account. The demonstrable importance that individuals give to each of these regimes of value in relation to their treasured garment is of prime interest to this study.

## **2.2 Fashion and Materiality**

Materiality is concerned with the people's relationship to objects (Miller, 1987) and how a physical object can embody value and meaning (Taylor, 2013). This includes the recognition that objects are not merely carriers of meaning but active agents in the creation of it through their material, immutable form (Keane, 2005). Dress historians have considered both the design and the materials of garments,

examining these in great detail to determine their age, use and methods of construction. But Material Culture studies have only recently engaged with the materiality of dress, and materiality remains an under-researched aspect (Black et al., 2013: 7).

There has been academic tension between materiality and semiotic perspectives, with the former seeing meaning arise through physical interaction with objects, and the latter being more concerned with what the object represents (see Miller, 2005). Much of identity theory is grounded in semiotics, privileging the communicative powers of elements like dress for what they can tell us about the person and what they are projecting. Webb Keane (2005) developed a richer semiotic perspective, pointing out the viewing clothing simply a carrier of meaning, ignores the mutability of the object. For Keane (2005), objects are bundles of qualities offering multiple meanings that become affixed through material and cultural interaction. Going further, current material culture perspectives see the object itself as having agency in the creation of meaning (Miller, 2005). Applying this to real life experience, Sophie Woodward (2015: 1) argues that “the material properties of things are central to understanding the sensual, tactile, material and embodied ways in which social lives are lived”.

Woodward and Fisher say that “an appropriate position on materiality must treat both the cultural and the material elements present in fashion” (2014: 11). They noted in 2015 that there had been “very little crossover in the literature of Fashion and Material Culture (2015: 18). Woodward’s work had initiated such interaction in studies that consider the clothing of ordinary people with: *Why Women Wear What They Wear* (Woodward, 2007); *The Global Denim Project* (Miller & Woodward, 2010); and *Blue Jeans: The Art of The Ordinary* (Miller & Woodward, 2012).

Jenss (2016: 21-22) further examined the relationship between fashion and material culture, noting that any study of clothing from a material culture perspective has methodological implications “it involves not only the examination of fashion and dress as material objects, [...] but also involves the exploration of material practices –

for example, what people do with material things.” In the light of such studies, this crossover between material culture and fashion forms a suitable area in which to situate this research; crucially, it offers strategies for engaging with the interrelationships of the person and the garment.

‘New materialism’ has also been considered as a theoretical framework for fashion. Granata (2012) traces the roots of new materialism to anthropology and sociology, with fashion studies and material culture as adjacent disciplines. New materialism is concerned with the agency and materiality of objects “involving a shift from human agency to the intelligent matter of the human body as well as the materiality of fabrics, clothes and technology” (Smelik, 2018: 34). The key difference from material culture is that new materialism attempts to transcend “the dualism of subjects and objects, of people and things, of human and non-human actors” (Smelik, 2018: 39). The perspective of new materialism offers a useful critique of material culture, which will be its purpose in this study. By looking at treasured garments through their material, cultural and emotional focal points, the complex interplay of people and garments is put at the heart of the research, helping to capture the processes that lead to the creation of meanings and values—meanings and values that change with the continuing relationship.

### **2.3 Studies of Cherished Possessions**

A treasured garment is an item that has special status for its owner, different from other items in the wardrobe. Other researchers have used the term ‘treasured’ in a descriptive sense when referring to possessions and clothing (Woodward & Fisher, 2015; Manandhar, 2014). Related terms such as ‘cherished’ (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Curasi et al., 2004), ‘special’ (Price et al., 2000; Richins, 1994a), ‘favourite’ (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Banim & Guy, 2000), ‘sacred’ (Friese, 2001), and ‘inalienable’ (Price et al., 2000) are also employed by scholars to define an object or possession that is emotionally, and sometimes physically, set apart from other things people own.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton’s (1981) research investigated the most

cherished objects in people's homes; they coded the most frequent categories of meaning to 'Self' or 'Enjoyment' followed by 'Immediate Family' and 'Memories' (1981: 84). Their study was conducted across a wide range of products in the home, a total of 1,694 separate things, of which those categorized as furniture, visual art and photographs were most often designated 'special' (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981: 58). They found people to be flexible in attaching meanings to objects yet, some things, like photographs, stood more often for memories, while other things recalled experience or personal values (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981: 86).

Curasi et al. (2004) examined the process by which individually cherished objects become irreplaceable heirlooms for a wider kinship group, using in-depth interviews in the homes of participant families. Describing individuals' cherished objects, the authors note, "Cherished or special possessions are treasured independent of their exchange value, and private or personal meanings are central to their worth"—the items are considered "irreplaceable, sacred" (Curasi et al., 2004: 609). They found that chosen objects representing families' inalienable wealth transcended individual meanings when they became used to represent the family going into the future, providing a sense of family identity and cohesion (Curasi et al., 2004: 619).

Wallendorf and Arnoulds (1988) found that personal meaning was more important than monetary value for their American participants, with sixty per cent of their respondents' 'favourite' things designated as such because of associated personal memories. In contrast, for Nigerian participants, personal memory scored low and answers were more evenly spread: the highest number, nineteen per cent, entailed spiritual or magical objects; seventeen percent cited exchange value, and sixteen percent aesthetic value. This shows that although associated personal memories can influence favoured items, cultural beliefs play a strong role. Curasi et al. (2004) frequently referred to cherished objects as being 'sacred' or having 'psychic energy' which is not so far removed from 'spiritual' or 'magical'. The idea that objects have their own power or aura can therefore apply to treasured possessions in a Western context as well.

It has been proposed that treasured or special possessions are reflective of people's changing roles, aspirations and priorities over their life span (Meyers, 1985 cited in Cluver, 2008: 26). Examining older people's relationship to special possessions, Price et al. (2000: 180) found that "mnemonically rich special possessions can figure prominently in [the] narrative process concerned with life meaning and legacy". In order to retain the meaning and status of the objects, many older people planned on bequeathing them to relatives who they believed would take good care of the item. Such literature suggests that special possessions aid in forming and solidifying an individual's life narrative, and they perhaps come to represent aspects of that life narrative.

Moving from treasured objects in general to garments in particular, little specific literature has been found. One account that links a 'treasured' garment with a fashion item is given in *What We Wore: A People's History of British Style*, a book which uses people's personal photographs to create a historical account: "When I was 16, my most treasured item of clothing was a black army surplus jacket with 'I'm So Modern that Everything is Pointless' scrawled on the back in big black letters in white tippex marker" (Manandhar, 2014: 13). Unfortunately, it is not recorded whether or not the contributor still owns that jacket or if it remains a treasured item.

The question of 'favourite' clothes appears in Banim and Guy's (2000) research, which found that women's favourite clothes were items that were easy to care for and that they knew they looked good in. These are very practical, day-to-day reasons that do not fit with other research on special objects or possessions. Therefore, the meaning of the word 'favourite' is being used in a different sense to 'cherished' or 'treasured'.

Kaiser also uses the word 'favourite' when drawing a distinction concerning straight, white men's favourite clothing. These clothes, according to Kaiser, serve "as mnemonic reminders of special times such as special dates or parties or accomplishments in sports or job interviews" (2001: 9) whereas the people outside that category showed a "preference for clothes [...] that can be worn to a variety of occasions", what Kaiser calls "contextual flexibility (2001: 9). Kaiser goes on to claim:

“Favourite clothes promise to serve their wearers well in the future, too. They seem to enable fond remembrances and the belief that good times can come again” (2001: 9). This linking of ‘favourite’ items to memories and life events recalls the findings of researchers looking at special possessions.

The wedding dress is an item that is said to have ‘sacred’ value because it is a ritual, transitional object that helps women move from their former single identity to their new role in a couple (Friese, 2001). Wedding dresses are seen to sit within the fashion system, albeit at a remove from other fashions, and the majority fall within the definition of everyday dress used here. Usually worn only once, then stored, there is a Western cultural tradition of keeping the wedding dress to pass on to a daughter, which is reflected in the large number surviving in museum collections. Wedding dresses are “laden with historical and social meaning before they are ever bought or made”, say Weber and Mitchell (2004: 5). This suggests the large role of cultural determinants as found in the literature on favourites.

Although the exact term varies across the literature, the literature of consumption studies portrays a wide range of relationships people have to cherished possessions especially noting their relationship to personal and cultural identity, memories and constructions of life narrative. Although the literature deals with themes in keeping and caring for treasured possessions, clothing is mentioned in few consumption studies. Due to clothing’s proximity to the body, its centrality in the creation and presentation of identity and its relationship with the fashion system, clothing can be seen as a distinct class of possession that merits further study in the context of special possessions. In the existing literature, themes of identity, emotion and value are apparent; what is not clarified is how these cherished possessions are used in everyday life, how their value changes over time, and how the biography of the object and the biography of the person become intertwined. These are issues that the research presented in this thesis has addressed.

## 2.4 Wardrobe Studies

A growing body of research that has considered clothing's meaning as a possession in the home is grouped here as 'Wardrobe Studies'. In 2001, Saulo B. Cwerner identified that more research was needed from fashion and social science academics into the private spaces of the wardrobe. This was because a large number of fashion and dress studies were, and still are, focused on the communicative element of clothing and assume that the clothing is being worn. Cwerner noted that "clothes 'spend' most of their time at rest" in the wardrobe, in the private spaces of the home (2001: 79). He acknowledges that the word 'wardrobe' has a dual meaning, referring to both the total amount of clothing a person owns and the physical space in which that clothing is stored.

This distinction is important for this study because *how* people keep things is potentially just as revealing as *why* they keep them. Cwerner goes on to describe five different dimensions of the wardrobe: consumption, organization, individualization, care and imagination. These are related to the "particular institutions that determine, in part, the meaning and materiality of dress and fashion" (2001: 82). All five elements are significant when examining people's relationship to treasured garments. While Cwerner's article does not include empirical data, it lays the groundwork for why and how researchers could approach studying people and their wardrobes. It concludes that "empirical studies of wardrobe practices are needed in order to specify the determinations that affect the way that particular people, or social and cultural groups, relate to clothes in the intimacy of their homes" (2001: 91). Cwerner's research provided the foundation for the approach adopted in the present study.

Kate Fletcher and Ingun Klepp's *Opening Up the Wardrobe: A Methods Book* presents fifty different wardrobe methods, the earliest from 1995 and steadily increasing over time (2017: 7). They note that wardrobe studies "focus on the physical, material aspects of wardrobes as an important way to offset the preference in qualitative interviews [...] to language and linguistic utterances". The terms

‘wardrobe studies’ and ‘wardrobe methods’ have both been used by researchers in the field; however, “these are sometimes employed in different ways describing distinct approaches” (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017: 168). For ease, the empirical studies below have all been called ‘wardrobe studies’ even though their methods vary.

Banim and Guy (2000) initially set out to examine women’s personal clothing collections and how these related to their identities. Their study had three strands: they asked their respondents, all women with a self-professed interest in clothes, to write a reflective essay about clothes, to keep a clothing diary for two weeks, and to participate in an interview next to their wardrobes. Banim and Guy felt that the wardrobe interviews gave the most interesting findings (2001: 218). The practice of keeping unworn clothes was so common that it was written about as a separate phenomenon in ‘Dis/continued Selves: Why Women Keep Clothes They No Longer Wear’ (Banim & Guy, 2001). Banim and Guy (2001) observed that women kept clothing for its sentimental value but, in addition, they kept items that were unfashionable, were not liked, were hardly worn, or were held ‘just in case’.

Sophie Woodward’s (2007) *Why Women Wear What They Wear*, was about how women construct their identity through dress with a focus on the moment of getting dressed. She inventoried every item in each participant’s wardrobe, the meanings or narratives attached to particular items, information on how many clothes storage spaces each participant had, and how often they wore each garment. So although the focus of the study was on the process of choosing what to wear, consideration of the clothes in the wardrobe ‘at rest’ was also central in this (following Cwerner, 2001). Woodward noted that older women had more kept clothing than younger women, partly because they had more storage space, but also because they had a longer span of time to accumulate clothing.

Bye and Mckinney’s (2007) ‘Why Women Keep Clothes That Do Not Fit’ builds on the findings of Banim and Guy’s (2001) article by focusing on one of the reasons given for clothes not being worn, that they no longer fit. They used Cwerner’s (2001) ‘Sociology of the Wardrobe’ and Banim and Guy’s (2001) findings to inform their



study, and theories of consumption, meaning and identity to underpin it. Bye and Mckinney did not interview their participants next to their wardrobes, but solicited responses to a web-based questionnaire from forty-six women aged 18 to 65. These women were all clients of an image consultant and the majority of them reported household earnings of over \$100,000 per year (Bye & Mckinney, 2007: 487). The women also had a professed interest in clothing. The focus on fit could help to explain why the majority of their respondents kept clothing for reasons relating to 'weight management', rather than the other categories of: 'investment value', 'sentimental value', and 'aesthetic value'. While Banim and Guy's and Woodward's research framed clothing in terms of identity, Bye and Mckinney's used value.

In another study of unworn clothes, a wardrobe ethnography of recent graduates in Bloomington, Indiana, Hertz (2011) found that participants revalued or reframed items so that they were worthy of keeping. She interviewed participants in front of their wardrobes about clothing they kept but no longer wanted, summing up their dilemma in the words, "I don't even know why I keep this" (2011: 14). She found the garments could become "mental and physical burdens for the owners" (2011: 14). As in other studies, sentimental and mnemonic values for kept clothing were found, but the particular focus was on the more problematic relationship with those clothes that did not hold a special status to the keeper.

Else Skjold (2016) adopted a temporal view, examining how individuals' wardrobes developed over a time span of twenty-five years. Her main findings were that people developed preferences in their teenage years that stuck with them throughout their life, with only slight amendments for age or life stage. Fabrics, shapes or style references are repeated in the wardrobe over time, and fashion trends were filtered through these established preferences. Skjold (2016) calls this concept 'the biographical wardrobe' and argues that this alternative understanding of dress practice highlights how "*continuity* rather than *newness* plays a vital role in the self-understanding of individual users." (135).

The different wardrobe studies considered here have classified the clothes people keep. All differentiate between 'active' and 'inactive' but around clothing that is rarely worn, no one term is agreed. Banim and Guy (2001) use the term 'transitional'; this refers to both the identity of the owner and the garments. This category refers to clothing that may or may not be worn again, where the owner has not decided whether to keep or divest of the item. Woodward (2007) refers to this as 'potential clothing'; the items could be worn but are not regularly worn. Cluver (2008) identifies four categories of unworn kept clothing: 'Permanent Inactive' that will not be worn again; 'Temporary Inactive' that might be worn again given the right occasion; 'Invisible Inactive' that people have forgotten that they owned; and 'Transitional Inactive' that an individual has decided to dispose of and is kept aside for that purpose (Cluver, 2008: 75-76).

Cwerner (2008) emphasizes the spatial element of clothing storage, where the wardrobe is a place of ordering and classification. There is some evidence to show that items of permanent inactive clothing are stored in a special place. Bye and Mckinney (2007) noted that items in their 'aesthetic' or 'sentimental' value categories often resided in a separate place to clothes in the active wardrobe. One of Hertz's participants kept dresses that were handed down from her mother and grandmother in a special place in her wardrobe: "these dresses were lovingly hung in garment bags and sandwiched between the most appreciated pieces of her active repertoire" (Hertz, 2011: 26). Banim and Guy noted that clothing's position in the wardrobe is not fixed: "displaced clothes would often travel through the wardrobe—physically in terms of where they were stored and in terms of the context within which they were worn" (2000: 322). They cite the example of a woman's flowery dress previously worn on weekends but later worn to work; as the role of the dress changed, so did where it was situated in the wardrobe. Such examples suggest that the physical positioning of the clothing and the owner's relationship to it are intertwined, hence the wardrobe participates in ordering identity, biography and meaning (Cwerner, 2001; Woodward, 2007).

The ‘treasured’ garment may be part of a person’s ‘active wardrobe’, an item worn every day, but literature suggests that it is more likely to be an unworn or rarely worn item. It is in this context that it is important to consider the literature around unworn clothes. An implicit assumption is that if clothes are not fulfilling their intended use as items worn on the body, then they should reasonably be discarded, and that the main reason for keeping an item of clothing is for wear. However, the literature highlights this is not the case for most people; it follows that clothing’s ‘usefulness’ is not bound up with it being worn.

**Table 2.1: Categories of Clothing Identified in Wardrobe Studies**

	Worn Regularly	Worn Rarely	Not Presently Worn	Will not Wear Again
<b>How worn or not</b>	Active	Potential (Woodward, 2007)		Inactive (Woodward, 2007)
			Invisible inactive (Cluver, 2008)	Permanent Inactive (Cluver, 2008)
			Temporary Inactive (Cluver, 2008)	Transitional Inactive (Cluver, 2008)
<b>Why worn or not</b>	Clothes are 'me' (Woodward, 2007)		No longer has lifestyle to wear them (Woodward, 2007)	
	Clothes fit (Bye & Mckinney, 2007)		Weight Management (Bye & Mckinney, 2007)	Sentimental Value, (Bye & Mckinney, 2007)
			Investment Value (Bye & Mckinney, 2007)	Aesthetic Value (Bye & Mckinney, 2007)
	Woman I am most of the time, (Banim & Guy, 2000)	Transitional Identities (Banim & Guy, 2001)		Continuing Identities (Banim & Guy, 2001)
	Woman I fear I could be (Banim & Guy, 2000)		Keeping 'just in case' (Banim & Guy, 2000; Hertz, 2011)	Discontinued Identities (Banim & Guy, 2001)
	Woman I want to be (Banim & Guy, 2000)	Kept as 'Costume' (Hertz, 2011)		

Note: Not all of Banim & Guy’s categories have been discussed in this review, but they are deemed sufficiently self-explanatory for the purposes of this table.

The literature reveals space for more research on how people relate to clothes in the private space of the home, as opposed to the public act of wearing. It can also be seen that regimes of value are important for the decision to keep clothing, and that these systems of value are not yet sufficiently understood. A variety of models have been suggested for how people organize their wardrobes, and how they are connected to identity, but less work is available on how stored clothing is cared for, the story of its acquisition, its relation to biographical meaning, and the imaginative element of the wardrobe.

Wardrobe studies have hitherto focused on multiple items of clothing. While these studies are useful for indicating overall trends, there is a gap concerning interaction of individual garments within the whole. Studies show that some clothing is more highly valued than others. By focusing on the most treasured items of clothing people have kept, further insight into values can be uncovered to inform not just identity construction, but relationships with meaning and emotion.

## **2.5 Identity, Biography and Narrative**

Investigation into clothing and fashion's role in the communication and creation of identity is a major strand of research within Fashion Theory (Lillethun, 2011). Much of the literature concerns how clothing can communicate or underline markers of identity such as gender, race, social class, membership of a subcultural group. Goffman (1961: 13) noted that clothing is a special class of possessions in relation to identity; he refers to the clothing, cosmetics, related tools and the spaces they are stored as a person's 'identity kit', by which they obtain some control over how they are perceived by others. Belk (1988) expanded the concept of the self to include objects an individual owns, people to whom they are close, and experiences they have had, under the term 'extended self'. For Belk, people use possessions in a predominantly active way to manage their identities with clothing (along with cars and houses) taking the role of a 'second skin' (1988: 151).

Kaiser describes how self identity and appearance management can be seen as a transaction between the person, an audience and a situation, explaining that the self can also be an audience, such as looking in a mirror (1998: 187). Kaiser differentiates between 'ascribed identities' (gender, race, age), and 'achieved identities' (career, social life, politics) over which people have more control (1998: 187). Through appearance management using clothing, people can choose which aspects of identity they would like to highlight or subvert. Tseëlon (1995) argued that clothing is key to presenting the many selves that make up women's identity. These studies are focused on the communicative role of clothing when worn in public, and how individuals negotiate a public image via clothing rather than the relationship between the person and the material object. The concern of this research is more on how clothing is used in the construction of the self. Entwistle (2015: 17) points out that questions of identity are often questions of meaning, and that there is more work to be done in this area in relation to fashion and clothing.

Banim and Guy (2000) found that women used clothes to help themselves deal with life changes such as weight gain, middle age, and having children, and that women were active agents in using their clothes to emphasize different aspects of their identity depending on the situation. They noted that older items of clothing were kept because they provided a connection to individuals' life story and carried both current and past meanings (Banim & Guy, 2000: 322). The researchers used identity to categorize the kept but unworn clothes. 'Continuing Identities' covered items kept for positive reasons providing a connection with former selves. 'Discontinued Identities' referred to clothing that had negative associations, for example gifts of clothing that women didn't like, or clothing 'mistakes' that were too expensive to throw away. 'Transitioning Identities' encompassed clothes that were currently unworn but which participants believed they would or could wear in the future (Banim & Guy, 2001).

Woodward (2007: 61) observed that women tend to keep clothing once they have finished experimenting with different looks and their sense of self is more settled. She found that "if clothing fails to capture the biography a person wants to

construct, the only option is to throw it away” (Woodward, 2007: 52), whereas in Banim and Guy’s (2001: 211) analysis such items could be kept as a reminder of what the owner is not. In both, the women actively curate their identity through dress, “sorting out former selves through clothing” (Woodward, 2007: 51). Woodward also found unworn clothing was used to provide a link between women’s changing identities, “Women keep these items as a memory, or a reminder, even if they no longer have the lifestyle to wear them” (Woodward, 2007: 62), which easily maps onto Banim and Guy’s ‘Continuing Identities’.

The link between wardrobes and personal biography has been made by a number of theorists. Cwerner notes “in the wardrobe, clothes turn into fossilized memories of a person’s past” (2001: 87). However, the clothes in the wardrobe have the ability, to be more fluid as they can be worn on multiple occasions and at different life stages. Woodward (2007: 52) suggests that women can wear items from the past in a different setting reactivating “former aspects of themselves”. She also notes the linear nature of oral and written biography, while clothing biographies can be non-linear (Woodward, 2007: 66). This can include the old clothes of others. For Botticello, wearing vintage clothing involved materializing personal values (2014: 114), highlighting that what was important to her participants was the ability to make second hand clothing part of their own wardrobe by integrating it into their own biography.

Keeping pieces of clothing has been compared to selecting photographs for an album (Woodward, 2007: 62). Banim and Guy (2001: 206-7) compare keeping unworn clothes to “keeping an old photograph” in that seeing the items reminds people of memories of themselves. Banim and Guy expected to find that women kept clothes because of sentimental value, but their prediction that clothes were simply ‘memory joggers’ for happy times was too limited. There were additional reasons linked to memory that their participants described; one was about emotion at the time of wearing (“this item made me feel a way I want to remember”), and another story “lay in the in the events that were occurring during active use” (Banim & Guy, 2001: 207). Drazin and Fröhlich’s (2007) view of photographs, that they are

“not simply a memory but reminders of an obligation to remember” (cited in Miller & Parrott, 2009: 513), echoes what Banim and Guy found in relation to clothes. While analogies between clothing and photographs aid our understanding, clothing functions in a different way to the photograph, because of its ability to layer meanings through being worn in different contexts, and through sensual elements such as touch and smell.

Literature suggests that memory of use, events and feelings that are associated with a possession is significant in constructing personal meanings and values. Recent research on memory emphasizes that the way in which something is remembered is dependent on the present situation of the person who remembers: “It is as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of preserving and retrieving earlier stories” (Erll & Rigney, cited in Jenss, 2015: 7). Studies of memory practices highlight that memory is not static, and that the interplay of past and present is central to remembering. Taking this idea further Alaida Assmann (2011) sees retaining a memory as the exception. The mind cannot remember everything, so memory is necessarily incomplete, and things once remembered can be forgotten. Assmann also points to the significance of ‘the now’: for recollection, the memory has to be meaningful in the present moment.

The use of objects and their effect on memory has been the subject of considerable research (Miller & Parrott, 2009: 503). It is known that people link their memories to objects in a variety of different contexts such as a souvenir to remember a trip, a memento of an occasion or a keepsake from a lost loved one. Cluver notes that objects are often symbolic of personal achievements or representative of a person’s past (2008: 25). The object is used as a concrete, material representation of something more abstract. It is not just the object but also the memories themselves that are thought of, in a Western context, as possessions to be kept or preserved (Hallam & Hockey, 2001: 3), so the line between inanimate object and memory can become blurred. Stallybrass refers to “history, memory, and desire [...] materialized in objects that are touched and loved and worn” (Stallybrass & Jones, 2000: 11) in

the context of a European trader's confusion at the value indigenous people placed on things that were 'worthless' in an economic sense.

Clothing is particularly evocative for memory and its narrative evocation; items of clothing are intimate, embodied objects (Entwistle, 2015), that take on the residue of the person who has worn them (Wilson, 1985). It has been shown that "dress fabrics held intense meaning" for a woman with dementia, "triggering memories of experiences, emotions and events." (Wallace et al., 2011, cited in Buse and Twigg, 2016: 1118). Buse and Twigg point to clothing, in its materiality, as a tool "for creative storytelling, reminiscence and enactment of memories" (2016: 1130). Weber and Mitchell highlight the link between narrative, memory and clothing, remarking that "people seem to remember events in greater detail when they begin with sartorial details, and tell more compelling stories when they stop to attend to clothes" (2004: 256). So even in the absence of the garment, the remembered details of clothing becomes a catalyst for memory.

Slater (2014) showed how both the physical and the remembered garment can positively impact on memory, using oral testimonies from participants: Mary who had her garment, and Doris who could remember the details of her absent garment very well, even though other parts of her memory had faded. Both the actual garment and the remembered garment enhanced the memory of associated experiences of wearing. Describing why these clothing items had particularly rich associations, she adds "Both Mary and Doris' dresses were significant for the wearers at the time they were first worn and, as such, stood out in a lifetime of clothing memories" (Slater, 2014: 131). These garments and their associations were important to her participants' personal narratives, history, and sense of self.

Apart from clothing communicating elements of identity to others, we have seen how the wardrobe contributes to a sense of continuing identity and can be used to navigate life changes (Banim & Guy, 2001). Clothing is an active agent in life stories, repeat uses contributing in deeply layered ways, reinforced by sensual associations (Woodward, 2007). This adds to the power of clothing, even when present only in memory, to support life narratives. The complex interconnections between identity,



biography and memory are brought out through stories of significant garments. What remains to be determined is how garments that individuals particularly treasure relate to their sense of self and their developing life story.

## 2.6 Emotion

Lou Taylor referred to “one of the great voids of Dress History” as “its failure to examine emotional responses to clothing and appearance” (2002: 4). However, this absence is in some ways unsurprising because this kind of emotional evidence is often unavailable and the owners/ wearers of the garments are unknown and/or have long passed away. Nevertheless, fashion has a long history of popular, non-academic writing. Publications such as *A Second Skin: Women Write About Clothes* (Dunseath, 1998), *The Thoughtful Dresser* (Grant, 2009), *Worn Stories* (Spivack, 2014) and *Women in Clothes* (Heti et al., 2014) have investigated the personal, emotional relationship between women and their clothes. The importance of clothing as emotional, affective objects is strongly present in these works, but leaves work to be done in the theorization of these relationships and how they are formed.

Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell’s (2004) *Not Just Any Dress: Narratives of Memory, Body and Identity* bridges the gap between the popular literature and dress theory. It is a collection of essays, poems and fiction on fashion and dress framed by an academic introduction. Weber and Mitchell call their clothing narratives ‘dress stories’ and define them as “autobiographical narrative in which an item of clothing becomes a key organizing feature for a detailed account of life events” (2004: 256). They note that “Dress stories, limited and singular as they may be individually, can collectively point to silences, gaps, and issues of social import” (2004: 266). Even though dress can be seen to be highly individual in its identities and narratives, these can have wider significance in portraying how meaning is constructed through dress in everyday life (Weber and Mitchel, 2004: 256). The personal nature of the stories communicates the ‘Wearer’s View’, a perspective which has been overlooked in much of the academic writing around fashion and dress (Tseëlon, 2012).

In her study of the social psychology of material possessions Helga Dittmar asserted that “material possessions have socially constituted meanings, over and above instrumental utility: ‘To have is to be’” (1992: 204). Dittmar highlighted three defining characteristics of possessions: “control, emotional value and association with self” (1992: 8). Dittmar saw one purpose of acquiring possessions to enhance the emotional state. Such emotional relationships with objects go back to infancy.

Dittmar refers to ‘the first treasured possession’; referencing Winnicott (1953) who pointed out that infants develop relationships with a ‘cuddly’, which is used for comfort and reassurance. Winnicott focuses on the significance of a baby’s first ‘not me’ possession. He viewed these as substituting for the absent nurturing person, usually the mother, and for which ‘transitional object’ the child develops an affective relationship. The transitional object helps the child to differentiate from what is self and other as “the cuddly is perceived partly as self and partly as belonging to the environment” (Dittmar, 1992: 48-49).

Ruggerone argues that what is missing from the literature on fashion is an analysis of “the feelings we experience *about* and *in* our clothes when we are dressed” (2017: 573) and points to affect studies, which call for abandoning the mind-body dualism (Ruggerone, 2017: 578). Ruggerone found that sociological approaches to “‘the phenomenon of being dressed’ seem to uncover only some aspects (the rational, cognitive ones) of a complex relationship, while at the same time leaving others (the non-rational, sensory ones) implicit, glossed over, unexplored” (2017: 574). This indicates the gap in our knowledge of links between the sensory experience of dress and the feelings that it inspires.

Much of the research that concerns clothing and emotion is done from a psychological perspective. Approaching fashion from the perspective of positive psychology, Rebecca Smith and Julia Yates (2018) used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the experience of wearing a happy outfit, and investigate the connection between clothing, identity and well-being. The authors found that the participants reported feelings of joy and were ‘intentionally managing their identity’ using their happy clothing, linking emotion back to identity

construction. As the approach in this research was psychological, the role of the materiality of the clothing, and the material garment's role in the production of emotion remained under-explored.

Adam and Galinsky's (2012) concept of 'enclothed cognition' describes, "the systematic influence that clothes have on the wearer's psychological processes" (918). They found that individuals' attention increased when wearing a lab coat when described as a 'doctor's coat', but had no effect when the same coat was described as a 'painter's coat'. Their study concluded, "The influence of clothes thus depends on wearing them *and* their symbolic meaning" (Adam & Galinsky, 2012: 918). Rebecka Fleetwood-Smith et al. (2018) explored the lived experience of clothing attachment during wear. They proposed extending the term to 'Personal Enclothed Cognition,' finding that "enclothed cognition can occur when garments are infused with a personal resonance" (Fleetwood-Smith et al., 2019: 49). Participants were interviewed wearing an item of clothing they felt emotionally attached to. They applied the term 'Symbolic Resonance During Wear' to "what wearing the attachment clothing represented, implied and allowed the wearer to experience" (49). Fleetwood-Smith's work concluded that "actively worn attachment clothing linked to positive experiences and memories" (56) and that it was "intertwined with the self and, as such, strongly connected with self-perception and self-image" (56). This was due to the personal meanings that their participants attributed to their garments.

Christoph-Simon Masuch and Kate Hefferon (2018) linked sentimental attachment with nostalgia. They identified two key themes: (a) 'Reminiscing about past selves' which referred to no longer worn items as "a positive framing of life experiences, life stages or significant others"; and (b) 'Preserving aspects of self' for items that were worn occasionally, usually garments that "had once been received as gifts or passed on from significant others", a situation of more emotional complexity than mere reminiscence" (Masuch & Hefferon, 2018: 365). This suggests a difference in feelings about items that are treasured and no longer worn, as opposed to those that are still in active use. Masuch and Hefferon (2018) recognized this area of "emotionally

charged attachments to special clothing items” as one that deserves further research (358). Their findings recognize the power of the emotional element in the relationship between people and their garments.

The literature reveals that the relationship between clothing and emotion has been undertaken mainly from a non-academic or psychological perspective, and that this is a recent area of interest. A material culture approach has more to add to the subject, especially in relation to treasured clothing where the development of emotional attachment can be probed, and the relationship of emotional content and materiality explored.

## **2.7 Value**

The classification of a garment as ‘treasured’ is an individual’s judgment of the item’s value, but the value registers that the owner uses are unclear. Studies that consider memory and identity suggest that sentimental value and a personal connection to the object predominate, but other ‘registers of value’ need consideration.

Value is not something that is fixed or absolute (Herrnstein-Smith, 1983; Boradkar, 2012). It is “an effect of multiple, constantly changing, and continuously interacting variables” (Herrnstein Smith, 1983: 30). Graeber (2001: 114) outlines how, to understand an attributed value, “one must understand the meaning of the various acts of creation, consecration, use and appropriation, and so on, that make up its history”. It is only by considering the material and cultural meanings that have accrued through personal interaction with an object that we come to understand value in its multiple dimensions. The personal meanings of treasured garments allow us to better understand how value arises and becomes entangled with them.

### **2.7.1 Economic Value: Use Value, Exchange Value and Commodities**

Karl Marx wrote extensively on defining the value of commodities, this brief summary is intended to highlight the core ideas about value that were used to consider the evidence in the thesis. Marx identifies three interlinked ways a

commodity's value can be measured, 'use-value', exchange value and what he refers to as 'value' which is commonly referred to as 'labour value'. Not everything with a use value can be thought of as a commodity, as a commodity is something that can be exchanged. In order to be a commodity, an object must have a 'social use value', a value to other people (Marx, [1867] 1990: 131).

He begins by defining 'use value' as how an object fulfills a human want or need. The same object can have multiple use values that are decided by the user, but remain tied to the object's material form (Marx, [1867] 1990: 126). The object's use value does not have to be the use it was intended for and is open to individual interpretation, for example, if a shoe is used as weapon, it *still has* a 'use value'.

Marx then contrasts use value with exchange value. Exchange value is what the item can be exchanged for, which is usually (but not always) expressed in monetary terms. Unlike use value, exchange value is not tied to the materiality of the object but is determined by outside forces. Marx sums up this difference between use value and exchange value "As use-values, commodities differ above all in quality, while as exchange-values they can only differ in quantity." (Marx, [1867] 1990: 128). This relates to exchange values being equivalent, x amount of gold is worth x amount of lead, yet their properties and use are very different. Therefore, as Marx notes, the exchange value of commodities can be "totally independent of their use value" (Marx, [1867] 1990: 128).

A third type of value identified is 'labour value', which for Marx, is the true value of a commodity. The labour value is measured in the human time and energy that has gone into an object's creation (Marx, [1867] 1990: 129); commodities that require the same amount of human labour have the same value. Marx uses the example of the value of a coat compared to 10 yards of linen; the coat is worth double the linen, so the coat is worth 20 yards of linen, reasoning that the linen contains half as much labour as the coat, therefore it has half the value (Marx, [1867] 1990: 132-136).

Marx argued that labour value is hidden by the capitalist system; expressing exchange value in monetary terms obscures the amount of labour required to create that object. An example would be two T-shirts made in the same factory in the same way, but one, a designer T-shirt would have a higher exchange value. For Marx, these two T-shirts would be worth the same amount, as the same amount of labour had gone into producing them. Marx argues that this gap between labour value and exchange value creates a belief that objects have an 'intrinsic' value unconnected to the human labour required to create it. In the case of brands, the symbol of the brand is seen to have value in and of itself, unconnected to human labour. In this way that people are distanced from the true value (the labour value) of the commodities they buy. This assumed intrinsic value of the object, created by capitalist exchange systems, Marx calls 'commodity fetishism' (Marx, [1867] 1990) leads people to want to acquire more things for reasons apart from need or usefulness, while ignoring the human relationships that create those things.

Appadurai (1986) further elucidated exchange value. Paraphrasing Simmel, he states that value "is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgment made about them by subjects" (Appadurai, 1986: 3). He adds that economic exchange bridges desire and enjoyment of the object, that to fulfill desire the buyer must sacrifice some other object; it is what the buyer is willing to sacrifice, and what the seller will accept, that determines the value of the object at that moment.

Kopytoff (1989) posits that things can move in and out of commodity status throughout their 'social lives'. Commodities are defined by their ability to be sold; if an item is removed from the realm of salability, it takes on "a special aura of apartness from the mundane and the common" (Kopytoff, 1986: 69). This is what he calls, 'singularization', making a thing unique, special and irreplaceable; he locates the desire for singularization in complex western societies and states that people tend to overestimate the exchange value of their own singularized objects (Kopytoff, 1986). Items worth a lot of money or no money at all can both be referred to as 'priceless'. Kopytoff (1986) uses the example of a rare Picasso being both 'priceless' and worth a large amount of money to illustrate that items can have a monetary

value attached to them, even if they are not for sale. Other studies, for example Curasi et al. (2004), show that many people consider items in their possession as 'priceless' or 'irreplaceable' even if they have no economic or monetary value.

Hockey et al. (2015) used the example of a pair of trainers to highlight the difference between commodity and singularized status, and, arguably, the public and private meanings of things, "One object – a pair of trainers – thus figures as a commodity within a wider spectrum of similar commodities within which it will *share* meanings. However, it may also be subject to processes of differentiation or singularization" (Hockey et al. 2015: 34). The pair of trainers retains its publicly held meanings or values as trainers, but also has personal meanings or physical alterations and patterns of wear that makes it unique. The concept of singularization is essential for understanding 'The Cultural Biography of Things' which is the story of an object's journey from commodity to singularized status, and subsequent singularizations or commodifications (Kopytoff, 1986: 90). This concept of singularization and the biographical journey of an object is adopted in this thesis for the investigation of treasured garments.

### **2.7.2 Hedonic Value**

'Hedonic Value' refers to the enjoyment derived from an object. Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000: 60) describe hedonic goods as providing "fun and pleasure" giving examples such as "designer clothes and sports cars", contrasting utilitarian goods as "primarily instrumental and functional" such as "microwaves and minivans". Both the hedonic and the utilitarian can be seen as aspects of Marx's use value because both 'fulfill a human want or need'. In addition, utilitarian and hedonic elements can be present in one item, for example a coat can be both warm (utilitarian) and delightfully soft (hedonic). Referencing Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Cluver (2008) states that items which hold hedonic value have the potential to prompt positive emotional arousal through multisensory experiences, such as "tastes, sounds, scents, tactile impressions, and visual images" coupled with "historic and/or fantasy imagery" (23). Hence, hedonic value directly speaks to the potential

for the sensory qualities of a garment to become associated with emotional states. These concepts of hedonic value, sensory interaction, and association of garments with moods and emotions are employed in this thesis.

### **2.7.3 Public and Private Value**

Richins (1994b) makes the link between a possession's meaning and the source of its value, identifying two types of meaning-generated value: personal and public.

Personal value is described as "the sum of the subjective meanings that object holds for a particular individual", while public value is the commonly agreed subjective meanings assigned by outside observers (Richins, 1994b: 505-6). This system of valuing is necessary because "economic value cannot fully capture the actual value of many of the objects owned by consumers" (Richins, 1994b: 504). Richins identifies four categories of meaning: utilitarian, enjoyment, representation of interpersonal ties, and identity and self-expression; and notes that it is a combination of them that contribute to the value of an object (1994b: 507).

Bye and Mckinney (2007) used value to categorize the reasons that women keep clothing that no longer fits. In addition to 'weight management', they identified three other categories: 'investment value', clothing that cost a lot of money; 'sentimental value', clothing that had personal meanings attached to it; and 'aesthetic value', clothing that was held as beautiful. They found that the same item of clothing could move through the first two categories before being either divested or permanently stored as a sentimental or aesthetic object. Participants who held onto clothing for sentimental reasons were in the minority; the majority listed Weight Management or Investment Value as their reasons for keeping. These could be seen to map onto Banim and Guy's 'Transitional Identities'; in all of these categories, the participants may wear the item again in the future. It is only when they have decided that the clothing is to remain both kept and unworn that the item is assigned 'Sentimental' or 'Aesthetic' value (Bye & Mckinney, 2007) or becomes part of 'Continuing' or 'Discontinued' identities (Banim & Guy, 2001).



Sentimental value could be seen to correlate to Richins (1994b) personal value because it is to do with the meanings and memories that an object evokes for that person. However, 'Aesthetic Value' can be both a personal and public judgement. Bye and Mckinney's (2007) 'Investment Value' belongs to the realm of exchange values, it is the amount of money the customer has bought the item for, not how much they believe they could sell it for. Here, the individual is concerned they have not got enough use out of the garment for the amount of money they have paid.

A type of private value that has been referred to specifically with regard to clothing is 'age value'. Woodward (2007) highlights how age value is significant to one of her participants through the material biography of the item and its continuous use, rather than as the embodiment of a specific time or memory. It is the passage of time and continuous wearing that is important (Woodward, 2007: 55, following Riegl, 1982). A public interpretation of age value in relation to clothing is found in the reframing of second hand clothing as 'vintage', which uses age value to construct value around old clothes (Jenss, 2015: 1). Jenss' (2015) study focused on the 1960s retro scene in Germany and found that it was not just the period look individuals wanted, but garments that were actually produced in the 1960s: "clothes that are precisely valued for their materialization of time and 'datedness'" (Jenss, 2015: 1). Authenticity was important to her participants; it was important that the clothing was 'there' in the 1960s, even if its current wearers were not. The materialization of time discussed by Jenss is slightly different to Woodward's conception as it is a specific time, i.e. the 1960s, rather than the generic passing of time that is important. However, for both Woodward and Jenss, the material garment is valued for embodying time.

Clothing therefore has both private memories and public meanings bound up in it. Jenss acknowledges this saying "Clothing and fashion can be understood as constitutive components of personal and cultural memory, or remembering" (Jenss, 2015: 5). These dual registers of meaning, the collective and the personal, exist because clothing sits at the edge of the personal and the social world (Young, 1994: 197). Hunt questions the best way to represent private and public memory via

textiles citing Boym's (2001) suggestion that the frameworks of cultural memory offer signposts 'for individual reminiscences and multiple narratives'" (Hunt, 2014: 213). In this way it is important to understand that one item of clothing holds multiple narratives that co-exist and that cultural memory needs to be considered when looking at an individual experience. The meanings of clothing can move between individual, collective and individualized forms of collective experience.

Crewe (2017) points to memory as one way that 'value-meaning' can emerge and links this with identity and biography. Crewe argues, "value emerges through practices of possession, loss and memory as well as through production and purchase" (2017: 126). This shows that notions of identity, memory and value in an object are interdependent on each other, and it is difficult to discuss questions of one without the other two. All are bound up in the question "How, why and where do things become captivating, meaningful and enchanting to us?" (Crewe, 2017: 117). This study of treasured clothing takes up this question from a particular perspective. The literature suggests that there are many types of private values and meanings that can become associated with possessions and garments. This thesis explores how personal meaning is created and linked to value, and identifies the different values associated with the treasured garment.

## **2.8 Addressing Gaps in Current Knowledge**

The literature relevant to the study of treasured garments pointed to gaps in knowledge that this research has gone on to explore. Some authors (Black et al. 2013) note that materiality is underutilized when considering clothing. The approach in the current research, by taking the 'most treasured' garment as its focus, allows the materiality of the garment to be explored in more depth and focuses attention on a specific item of clothing, the process of treasuring and the relationship between the object's and owner's biographies. This research extends the literature on the material culture of clothing by focusing specifically on the treasured garment and extends the literature of fashion studies by focusing on everyday dress.

As has been shown, the literature on cherished possessions is from a consumption studies perspective and does not specifically relate to clothing, giving an opportunity to extend knowledge in this area. This is realised in Chapter 5, Acquisition, by the exploration of how the acquisition of the treasured garment impacts the participant's feelings about it.

Wardrobe studies reveal sentimental value as one motivation for women to keep clothing, but leave a gap for investigating how sentimental values and personal meanings are created for individuals. Between them, the wardrobe studies reviewed point to issues of identity (Banim & Guy, 2001; Woodward, 2007) and value (Bye & McKinney, 2008; Cluver, 2008; Hertz, 2011), but there is space to use the study of treasured garments to explore the relationships between identity, biography and value. Throughout this thesis there is a focus on the personal meaning attributed to treasured garments and how and why these garments in particular are valued above others.

There is also the question of wardrobe storage practices and how individuals organize and care for their clothing. It has been noted that clothes 'travel through the wardrobe' (Banim & Guy, 2000: 322) as their use changes, however, more research is needed to show how and where treasured garments are stored to establish if they are indeed kept differently to other clothing in the wardrobe. The care and storage practices of these garments are explored in relation to their materiality in Chapter 6, Materiality, which considers a link between the emotional attachment and care and repair of the garments.

The focus of wardrobe studies is also overwhelmingly on women, this study also contributes the male wearer's view, a perspective that is under-represented in fashion research. The wardrobe has been described as an 'archive' of past selves (Hunt, 2014) and the link between people's wardrobes and biographical narratives has been established, but the role that particular items play in these narratives is yet to be explored. This is addressed by focusing on a smaller number of garments, to

allow a greater depth of experience to be recorded. Chapter 7, Identity, explores the treasured garments role in life transitions

The review has shown that the meanings of possessions and clothing are tied to questions of identity, emotion and value and that these three elements are interlinked. Clothing is an important part of an individual's identity and how that identity is communicated, this identity can change over time and clothing can reflect these changes and remind people of their 'former selves'. Clothing is seen as special class of object in relation to both identity (Goffman, 1961) and memory (Hunt, 2014), and the importance of both clothing and special objects in the construction of life narratives is apparent.

Memory seems to be significant in constructing private meanings and values in that it is the memory of use, events and emotions that the possession is associated with that promotes its importance for individuals. There is a distinction between economic registers of value and personal registers of value and it can be seen that materiality and memory play a role in establishing the personal value of a garment. The process by which a piece of clothing becomes singularized and then treasured requires examination, which this thesis does in Chapter 9, Value.

The range of disciplines covered in this literature review were necessary given that questions surrounding clothing possession, use and treasuring are not adequately covered in the literature of fashion studies. By bringing together the findings of adjacent disciplines this research is able to propose new perspective on how we live in and with our clothing, and seeks to advance the subject of Wardrobe Studies within the wider field of fashion studies. The Methodology chapter will further position this research as a Wardrobe Study and situates it within a material culture framework.

### **3. Methodology and Methods**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Fashion is both extremely social and intensely personal. This study required research methods that engaged with both the private and public nature of its subject. The private aspect included the emotional relationship of the owner to the garment, the material embodiment of personal histories, practices of keeping the garment, and personal modes of valuing. To encompass these, methods from Social Science (semi-structured wardrobe interviews and thematic analysis), Fashion Studies (garment and visual analysis) and Material Culture (analysis of practices, meanings and values) were employed. These methods provided corroborating perspectives on the phenomenon of treasured garments. More broadly, the research is situated in the interpretative tradition of qualitative research because this is able to deal with the actions, beliefs and desires of people in their everyday lives (Crotty, 1998).

This chapter outlines some basic assumptions of the research. Issues surrounding methodology in Fashion Studies are discussed leading to the theoretical underpinnings and reasoning for selection of the methods. Pilot studies and an auto-ethnography are evaluated to further inform the research direction. The second half of the chapter describes how the empirical research was conducted, explaining the rationale for participant selection and recruitment, the development of the interview guide and ethical considerations. The process of analysis is discussed with regard to theories of thematic analysis and reflexive research.

##### **3.1.1 Some Basic Assumptions**

As Tseëlon (2001: 447) points out, the choice of method highlights unarticulated assumptions. Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldbberg stress the importance of reflecting on the assumptions of research and presenting them clearly (2009: 9). The theoretical assumptions of this research are made clear with reference to the methods chosen. The ontological assumption of this study is that reality is interpreted and

constructed, and people interpret the objects around them. As a method in academic research, the semi-structured interview aims to explore the lives of the participants and record their experience of a phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). The reasoning for using interviews rather than participant observation to investigate treasured garments is because it was expected that the garment became treasured over a period of time through both mental and physical practice and experience; therefore an interview was deemed the most appropriate way to access this information. That is not to say there was not some degree of observation, the participants' interaction with the garment in the interview, and where and how they stored the garment was observed and recorded.

The theoretical assumptions around having the garment present are that objects are seen as having agency (Miller, 1987; Woodward, 2007) and being co-producers of meaning for their owner. Therefore the assumption is that the materiality of certain objects influences experience through interaction to create meaning (Woodward 2015).

The 'Wardrobe Interview' is an interview that is sensual, visual and spacial, and requires reflection and interpretation by the researcher. The different levels of interpretation in this project, the participant and their garment, the researcher and participant, the researcher and garment led naturally to Alvesson and Sköldbörg's (2009) *Reflexive Methodology*, that positively encourages multi-layered interpretation rather than the singular representation of a reality on the basis of collected data. Methods and theories from different disciplines inform an 'interpretive repertoire' (Alvesson & Skoldburg, 2009) that explores the multiplicity of interpretations of treasured garments. There is consideration of the relationship between person and object (interview), the object itself (object analysis), the person (interview – background questions), the relation of that object to fashion and culture and a consideration of treasuring garments as a personal, social and cultural practice.

### **3.1.2 Methodologies in Fashion Research**

There is a noticeable lack of discipline specific literature on qualitative research methods in fashion and dress. Yuniya Kawamura (2011: 1) sees the lack of “clearly articulated theoretical frameworks and methodological strategies to study fashion and dress” and Heike Jenss notes that the field of Fashion Studies has evolved without a “methodological canon” (2016: 2). The result is that researchers in fashion and dress often adapt methods from other disciplines. Francesca Granata argues for a ‘multi-methodological’ approach for researchers investigating Fashion and Dress because the “inter-media nature of fashion in general [...] calls for a range of different approaches” (2012: 74), while Jenss similarly identifies “[t]he essential need for the use, combination and adaption of multiple methods in the exploration of fashion” (2016: 11). Kawamura (2011) and Jenss (2016) recognize the contribution Lou Taylor (2002) made to methodologies in fashion and dress in relation to dress history, that is the study of garments in collections and related written and visual historical evidence.

### **3.2 Wardrobe Methods**

This study required methods that allowed an examination of the relationship between person and clothing and material elements of garments in the private space of the home rather than the public space of wearing. Therefore ‘Wardrobe Methods’ were selected. Wardrobe methods is an umbrella term that covers a number of different approaches and methodological stances.

Two key definitions are ‘The Wardrobe Audit’ and ‘The Wardrobe Interview’, the Wardrobe Audit is defined as “The process of creating a systematic overview of the wardrobe and/ or associated actions and relationships” (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017: 170). They map contents of the wardrobe using quantitative and/or qualitative evidence and record elements such as numbers of garments, how often each is worn, where they are worn, laundry habits, care and so forth. Kate Fletcher and Ingun Grinstad Klepp (2017) concede that creating an audit for multiple wardrobes is

time consuming so also include in the 'Wardrobe Audit' definition methods that focus on specific parts of the wardrobe.

The Wardrobe Interview is similar to The Wardrobe Audit as "many of them take place in the informant's home and involve interviews being conducted around each garment" (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017: 173). What unites Wardrobe Interviews "is that specific garments and/ or clothing related behaviors act as a 'gateway' to opening up the wardrobe" (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017: 173). On balance, the term Wardrobe Interview has been selected to describe the method due to the focus on one or a small number of garments, which led to the opening up of the rest of the wardrobe. The elements of Wardrobe Audits included are the recording of information about use, wear, cost, occasions of wear and examining how the treasured garments are stored in the wardrobe. The wardrobes of the participants were engaged with, but not to the extent and detail in which the descriptor of Wardrobe Audit would be accurate.

### **3.2.1 Wardrobe Interviews**

The interviews took place in the participant's home. The home, and more specifically, the bedroom and wardrobe are intensely private spaces (Cwerner, 2001; Woodward, 2007; Miller, 2011; Hunt, 2015). Much of the research around the sociology of the home has tended to focus on the living room because it is the border of public and private space; it is a place for display of the self (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Waitt, Gill and Head (2009) argue that communication and the ability to describe experiences are stimulated when researchers and participants are in the material surroundings that they are researching (cited in Klepp & Bjerk, 2014: 377). Therefore, in this study, the Wardrobe Interviews were conducted near the space of the wardrobe. This allowed the participant to control the degree of access to private spaces that they felt comfortable with and the researcher to see where and how the garments were stored as well as the potential to discuss other items in the wardrobe. This is inline with Fletcher and Klepp's observation that most



wardrobe interviews take place in the wardrobe environment, the specific location of the practice studied, and examine “the garments and the relationships with the people that wear them” (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017: 2).

Ingun Grinstad Klepp and Mari Bjerck (2014) assert that Wardrobe Interviews yield a deeper level of understanding than a standard qualitative interview for both the researcher and the participant as it enables the participant to physically interact with the material objects that are being spoken about. The physical presence of the garment reminds the participant about specific considerations, experiences and emotions (Klepp & Bjerck, 2014: 377) and allows tacit evidence to be shared. Wardrobe interviews can be seen as a specific kind of Object Interview, a technique used by sociologists and anthropologists as a way to stimulate personal narratives and memories (Woodward, 2015: 4).

Fletcher and Klepp note the wardrobe Interview is “easily combined with other methods and lends itself to obtaining very different knowledge about the way clothes, or aspects of the wardrobe are selected” (2017: 175). In this study the Wardrobe Interview was combined with a ‘Garment Analysis’, the rationale for this is outlined below.

### **3.2.2 Garment Analysis**

Since it is the physical, material treasured object itself that is at the core of the feelings and values constructed around it, analysis of the garment was undertaken for any further light it could shed on the treasuring phenomenon. This method is commonly used in dress history and by museum curators, who, most of the time, do not have access to the owner of the garment for information, so must use the garment itself. The value of this approach, according to Valerie Steele (1998: 239) quoting Jules Prown (1982: 1) is that “artefacts are primary data for the study of material culture, and therefore, they can be used actively as evidence rather than passively as illustrations” and that “the formal data embodied in objects are

therefore of value as cultural evidence (Prown, 1980: 197). Woodward (2007) has commented that the approach of dress historians could prove useful for the analyses of contemporary clothing. In the current study, it was not only the garment and researcher; the owner was present as well, which gave the opportunity to ask for clarification on any points and prompted the participant to provide information that may not have come out in the interview.

The garment analysis encompassed aspects that reveal meaning, including style, age, condition, repairs, brand, fashionability and fabric. There has been little formal methodological writing on object analysis; instead it has been passed down orally from one curator to the next (Mida & Kim, 2015). Valerie Steele's 1998 article 'A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes Bag' briefly explains the methodology of object based dress history research. *The Dress Detective* (2015) by Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim is a more recent publication that aims to be a "singular framework that offers a clear and systematic approach to the study of dress artefacts" (22).

These researchers (Steele, 1998; Mida & Kim, 2015) refer to Prown (1982) who devised a methodology for object based research. Prown's methodology has three stages "which must be undertaken in sequence and kept as discrete as possible" (Prown, 1982: 7). The analysis proceeds from *description*, recording the "internal evidence of the object itself" (Prown, 1982: 7), to *deduction*, "interpreting the interaction between the object and the perceiver" (Prown, 1982: 7); to *speculation*, "framing hypotheses and questions which lead out from the object to external evidence for testing and resolution" (Prown, 1982: 7). Mida and Kim (2015) used Prown's work as a basis for their similar three stage system of observation, reflection and interpretation.

Although similar, Mida and Kim's (2015) method has been devised specifically for garments and has revised Prown's method in light of their own experience and that of other fashion researchers. They include practical checklists for analysis that can be worked through for each garment studied. This ensures that same information and reflections are captured for each garment. Whilst intended for those working with historic dress in a museum or private collection context, with some amendments,

the checklists have been adapted to suit this study. There are two checklists to complete, the first is a 'Checklist for Observation' to capture the information from the garment, which was completed after the wardrobe interview with the garment and participant present. The second is a 'Checklist for Reflection', which was completed directly after the interview, outside of the participants home by the researcher. The full checklists are shown in Appendix 1.

The inclusion of this checklist touches on two important aspects of qualitative research more generally: researcher reflection and sensuous engagement with the research. McCracken recognises that "[t]he investigator cannot fulfil qualitative research without using his/her own experience" (1988: 18), therefore it is necessary for the researcher to consider their own experience with the topic at hand in order to both design the research and to aid their analysis.

Alvesson and Sköldbörsen emphasise that research does not happen in a vacuum, that facts and data are never unmediated, but are always interpreted. The interpretation is not done by a neutral observer in a neutral environment, there is also personal/ political/ ideological context influencing the interpretation (Alvesson & Sköldbörsen, 2009: 12). There has been a growing movement in Ethnography, the Social Sciences and Fashion Studies towards a taking a more sensory approach to research, considering elements other than the visual (Pink, 2009). This includes paying attention to embodied experience such as smell, touch, sound and taste. Reflecting on the personal, sensory experience of the garment aids the researcher in recognising interviewees' biases, and helps the researcher to imagine the embodied experience of wearing and owning a garment, stimulating deeper interpretation.

By using a garment analysis, a method used in dress history and by museums to record and interpret a garment, in addition to a wardrobe interview this research uses a methodology that adds to the range of wardrobe studies and could be of use to future researchers in Fashion Studies.

### **3.3 Preparatory Studies**

#### **3.3.1. Pilot Studies and Interview Design**

Before commencing the study, an auto-ethnography and two pilot interviews were conducted. The purpose of the auto-ethnography was to reflect on the researcher's own experience with the phenomenon of treasured garments in order to develop the interview guide. The pilot studies were conducted in order to test and amend the interview guide, interview style and contribute to the development of the research protocol and object analysis. These studies were also useful to practice using recording equipment and allow the researcher to gain experience in interviewing. The sampling method was not tested in the pilot interviews; instead the participants were recruited through existing networks. One of the pilot studies was with a close friend, this meant that the interview was more of a conversation at some points and the researcher already had a lot of existing knowledge about the person being interviewed. The second interview was a friend of a friend, someone the researcher had not previously met; this was helpful in that there was not a pre-existing relationship so the roles of 'interviewer' and 'interviewee' were more clearly demarcated.

In both pilot studies, the participant was taken through the participant information sheet and consent was obtained, the interviews were audio recorded and an object analysis was carried out. The interviews were then transcribed, an initial analysis was done using thematic coding and a biographical sketch of the interviewee was created.

After conducting two pilot interviews and transcribing them, I noticed a tendency to interject too quickly, or give my own experiences too readily. While it is important for interviews to feel relaxed and the tone to be conversational, the researcher must remember that the purpose of the interview is to find out about the participant, and that the researcher is there to listen and prompt. Interviews can seem to be regular conversations, but as Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkman (2009) point out, although interviews come close to everyday conversations they have a distinct power

relationship, specific approach and technique. When conducting research interviews, I tried to give visual prompts such as nodding and maintaining eye contact so as not to halt the flow of the participants' answers and used verbal cues such as 'yes' and 'go on' to show listening without being obtrusive (McCracken, 1988). The pilot studies were valuable for refining the process of evidence creation.

In both pilot studies, the participants also showed me other items of clothing from their wardrobes and items connected with the treasured garment, such as photographs of them wearing the item. This led to a request in the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) for the participants to locate a photograph of themselves wearing their treasured garment (if they had one) ahead of the interview.

Originally, it was expected that interviews would be solely conducted in the bedroom with the treasured garment; however, both pilot studies naturally began in the living room or kitchen, with informal conversations. In one pilot study, the participant showed pictures of her wearing the garment that were displayed in the house and discussed other garments she had treasured but no longer owned. This allowed the researcher to get to know the participant before beginning the formal interview and built trust and rapport in a more 'public' space of the home. As a result of this, the protocol for the interview was altered, so that the 'background' section of the interview would be conducted in a living room or kitchen, before moving to the object interview section with the treasured garment, which, in most cases, was in the bedroom.

It was clear that there were times when the participant had either already answered a question in a previous answer, or that the interviewer had moved onto the next question without following up or probing further into the previous answer, this was a result of adhering too closely to a prescribed set of questions. In the pilot interviews, there were more separate questions, meaning the questions dealt with more specific aspects of the treasured garment, rather than allowing the participant to talk at length about what they felt was important about the garment in their own

words, to remedy this some of the original questions became prompts. This allowed the interviewer to use the prompts only if the participant did not mention a listed topic in their answer.

Another element for consideration was that participants struggled to verbalize their feelings of connection to their treasured garment when asked directly. It was much easier for participants to tell stories that included the garment, or speak more generally about attitudes to fashion and clothes than it was for them to communicate why in particular they had chosen that garment. Therefore one question was changed from 'Why is this your most treasured garment?' to 'Tell me about your treasured garment'. Background questions about attitudes to fashion, clothing and shopping were added, because the pilot study participants naturally spoke about these elements when discussing their treasured garment.

### **3.3.2 Autoethnography**

McCracken suggests a four-step method of enquiry to undertake qualitative research, the first step is to review the literature and the second is to review the cultural categories. McCracken explains "[t]he object of this step is to give the investigator a more detailed and systematic appreciation of his or her personal experience with the topic of interest" (1988: 32). This is particularly relevant for researchers in their own culture, as in this research, because "[i]t is by drawing on their understanding of how they themselves see and experience the world that they can supplement and interpret the data they generate in the long interview" (McCracken, 1988: 11-12). McCracken also notes that this stage is useful to prepare for the interview construction, identify ideas that may not be covered in the current literature and to 'manufacture distance' (1988: 33). Manufacturing distance is necessary when examining a researcher's own culture, such as in this study, because they are so familiar with it. In addition to the benefits McCracken describes, conducting an autoethnography is also a useful reflective practice for the researcher and gives a shared experience with the participant.

In order to begin the autoethnography I considered what my own treasured garment would be and the reasons I had for selecting that particular garment as treasured. I went and found the dress in my wardrobe, got it out and tried it on. I recorded my thoughts in an informal piece of writing, as if it was an interview transcript. This process allowed me to put myself in the position of the participants, reflect on the questions that I had considered when selecting my own treasured garment, and the questions I needed to ask myself about why that garment was treasured more than others. I used this process to develop the first version of the interview guide for the participants. I then created a 'Garment Biography' of the dress taking measurements, writing a detailed description, when and where it was purchased (to provide provenance), its age, and research on the designer who created it. I checked the labels, turned it inside out and examined it a systematic way, something I had never done before with one of my own items of clothing. This was in order to practice working through the object checklist (Appendix 1) and provide a detailed record of the garment. It also reminded me of elements that I had forgotten or not noticed in writing about the garment such as alterations and patches of wear.

The next stage of the process was to use the literature reviewed to analyse my experience of the treasured garment in order to see which existing theories related to my experience of treasuring a garment. An excerpt from this exercise is quoted below:

My own treasured garment is my wedding dress, it is not a traditional 'wedding dress', it was a dress I already owned and had worn multiple times before. I treasured it primarily because of its aesthetic value (Bye & McKinney, 2007), both on and off the body. There are however, other contributing factors that come into play including the prestige of owning my first designer dress (McCracken, 1986) and the cultural capital that came with that (Bourdieu, 1986). It has a high investment value (Bye & McKinney, 2007), and also because it fits me perfectly, I feel more attractive when wearing this dress, more like the 'Woman I Want to Be' (Banim & Guy, 2000). This item could be described as part of my 'potential' wardrobe (Woodward, 2007), as it is not an item I wear regularly but would and could wear again if an appropriate occasion arose, but I would also keep it even if it could no longer be worn.

The lessons learned from conducting an autoethnography were that the engagement with the physical garment allowed me to remember previously forgotten details, and, for me, it was both the physicality of the garment (how it looks, how it feels, the design) as well as the places I had worn it and the memories that it triggered that contributed to its treasured status.

### **3.3.3 Treasured Garment Workshop**

A method dubbed 'Material Imaginings' by Woodward (2015) asked academics from different disciplines what an old pair of jeans could be made into. What became more interesting was how the members of the workshop imagined the wearer by interpreting the material of the jeans (Woodward, 2015: 9). Woodward found that the workshop unsettled "the pre-existing narratives and interpretations" identified in prior life history and object interviews and enabled a different way of engaging with the same material (Woodward, 2015: 9).

This study took inspiration from this method and combined it with the checklist for observation and reflection. The Treasured Garments Workshop gathered five academics from fashion design and asked them to bring in a treasured garment. The researcher talked them through the checklist for observation and the checklist for reflection. The participants then swapped their treasured garments so that they were analysing a different person's garment and filled out the checklists. They were asked to write and then verbally share a garment description based on the checklist for observation. Then they were asked to write and share their feelings from the checklist for reflection. This included imagining the type of person that would wear the garment, this had interesting results because some participants imagined lives, events and personalities based on their analysis, others used sketching to show what outfits the treasured garment could be worn with.

After the analyser had given the results of the checklists, the owner told the story of their treasured garment, often relating it back to elements picked up by the garment analysis. This led to group debate about the garment or reasons for treasuring. Here,



the researcher was a facilitator of discussion, with the participants acting as interviewers and analysing the garments. The workshops were audio recorded and transcribed and the information given was used to check the themes developed from the main interviews. The evidence from the workshop does not feature in the findings because the same information was not recorded as those in the interviews. What the workshop was used for was developing the method and refining the checklists. Feedback from the participants of the workshop was that the checklists were too long, which led to further refining.

Similarly to Woodward's (2015) study, the participants imagined the wearer, even though in this case they knew owner of the garment was in the room. It produced multiple narratives of the same garment from different perspectives; however, the workshops did not have the same depth as the interviews allowed for. The workshop was used to investigate alternative methods for studying treasured garments and to inform the main study.

### **3.4 Participant Selection and Recruitment**

This study chose to utilise a participant recruitment strategy devised and implemented by Daniel Miller and Sophie Woodward (Miller, 1998; Miller, 2008; Miller & Woodward, 2011; Woodward 2015). The method involves selecting a street in an urban area such as London and advertising for participants on that street which is done by using leaflets and follow up visits by the researcher. This method of sampling selected is comparable to the more frequently used qualitative method of purposeful sampling (Silverman, 2014: 60). In purposeful sampling, the requirement is that participants recruited have experienced the phenomenon that is being studied. The selection criterion for this research is individuals that have a treasured garment. Therefore this method can be viewed as a version of purposeful sampling with the addition of a prescribed location.

Miller and Woodward described the following outcomes of using this method: it allowed access to people who might not ordinarily put themselves forward for such

research projects (Miller, 2008); it generated participants with a mix of genders, ages, cultures and backgrounds; it allowed for members of the same household to be interviewed (Miller 2011); it achieved a high take up rate (Miller, 2008; Woodward, 2015) and avoided selecting people as ‘tokens’ of pre-set categories such as age, gender, race, religion (Miller, 2008). These were all characteristics that were desirable for this research project. It was expected that this method would avoid attracting interest only from people with a pre-existing interest in fashion and attract a mix of genders in order to address the lack of diversity in previous studies.

In practice, the researcher’s experience in using this method of recruitment featured some key differences to what was described by Miller and Woodward and the project was amended accordingly.

A street in South East London was selected and fifty postcards distributed, with the researcher following up as planned several times a week later. The houses were large Victorian properties that had been divided into flats with communal hallways; therefore it was difficult to ensure that the homeowners had received the postcard. When the researcher visited the flats, there was often no answer and the two people that were spoken to were not interested in being part of the research.

In light of this lack of uptake, an alternative location was selected. This was the block of flats in which the researcher lived, which consists of two identical Edwardian blocks each containing eight flats. The benefit of this was that the researcher had access to the potential participants’ front doors in order to deliver the postcards and follow up at various different times. The pre-existing neighbourly relation meant that there was already some common ground shared and aided in building trust between the researcher and participant. It also led to chance encounters in common areas in which people would volunteer for the project, saying that they had got the postcard, were interested, but had not got around to contacting the researcher.

This method of participant selection generated a relatively diverse sample (see Section 4.1) although the participants were similar in age range, occupation, and

lifestyle. The take up rate was reasonable, with eight out of sixteen flats choosing to take part. It enabled the researcher to interview multiple participants from the same household (where this occurred, each interview was carried out individually). One participant (Abbie) moved house during the study and was interviewed in her new residence. This method achieved an equal gender mix, both single and partnered status, and varied sexual orientation. Perhaps of greater importance, it successfully recruited those who did not have a professed interest in fashion and individuals who said they would never normally take part in such a study.

### **3.5 Interview and Participant Recruitment Procedure**

Participation was advertised using 'Call for Participants' postcards (Figure 3.1 and 3.2). A website created for the project and the address featured on the postcard [www.treasuredgarments.com](http://www.treasuredgarments.com). This included details about the researcher, information about the project and contact details and was designed to allow participants to find out more once they had received the postcard. The postcard was followed up a week later by a personal visit to the house to explain the project or answer any questions the potential participant might have. Then, potential participants were given a more detailed 'Participant Information Sheet' (Appendix 2) and provided their name and email address so they could be contacted to arrange a date and time for the interview.



Figure 3.1 (upper) and 3.2 (lower): Front and back view of postcards that were delivered to potential participants.



## About

Why do we value some clothes above others? What is it about a garment that makes it difficult or impossible to part with? How does our relationship with these garments affect our everyday life?

These are just some of the questions my PhD research sets out to answer through a study of individuals' most treasured garments.

The dictionary definition of 'treasured' is 'keep carefully' and/or 'value highly', it could be an item worn often, infrequently or not at all. What matters is the connection between the person and the garment.

Over the next 3 months we will be conducting interviews with people from South East London about their most treasured garments. If you have received a card through your letterbox, you've come to the right place! Please visit the '[Info for Participants' Page](#) to find out more.

[Edit](#)

Figure 3.3: Screen grab from [www.treasuredgarments.com](http://www.treasuredgarments.com) homepage, screen grabs of all pages available in Appendix 3.

After the first set of postcards was delivered, six participants confirmed that they would like to take part in the research. After the first six interviews had been completed, postcards were re-delivered to households that had not been spoken to in the first round. This generated the interest and commitment from the final four participants. Five people who had initially expressed interest or confirmed an interview date and time went on to cancel and withdraw from the research.

One of the challenges was booking in interviews, as this group of participants had busy lives and were often away from home. If the interviews were planned too far in advance participants would forget or double book, so they were arranged the week

before they took place. There was no usual time for interviews as the participants had a range of working hours, so interviews were held in the morning, afternoon or evening depending on the participant's availability.

**Table 3.1: Interview timeline**

Date	Activities
Mar-18	Postcards Delivered
	Follow Up Visits to Participants
	Organised initial interviews
Apr-18	Bart Interview
	Mark Interview
May-18	Treasured Garment Workshop
	Zoe Interview
Jun-18	George Interview
	Rhuza Interview
	Postcards Delivered (round 2)
Jul-18	Morgan Interview
	Tom Interview
Aug-18	Ali Interview
	Abbie Interview
Sep-18	Phoebe Interview

The initial sample size of 15 participants was selected because examining individual cases in detail suited the search for understanding of a practice rather than to make wide generalizations about society (May, 1996). It is also in line with sample sizes used by other academics who carried out a similar type of research (Banim & Guy, 2000; Woodward, 2007; Cluver, 2008; Hertz, 2011). The final sample size was determined by the point at which 'saturation' was reached, in that, new interviews contribute little to the already established themes and categories. There was an option after the final interview with Phoebe to re-distribute postcards and follow up with additional flats but it was felt that the saturation point had been reached with ten interviews. If the two pilot studies, autoethnography and the five workshop participants were drawn on, this increased the total sample size to 18. These were

used to cross check the themes found in the main interviews. The findings focus on the group of ten participants that were interviewed.

### **3.6 Interviewing Process, Style, Questions and Guide**

Before the interview date participants were given a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) to read and a photograph of them wearing their treasured garment was requested. When the researcher arrived, the participants were asked if they had read the Participant Information Sheet and were shown a copy again. They were then given the Consent Form (Appendix 6) and asked to initial and sign for the relevant consents. After this the researcher set up the camera to begin the interview.

#### **3.6.1 Developing the Interview Guide**

A semi-structured interview was designed to elicit information about a participant's life and background, in order to record the experience of a phenomenon from their perspective (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009: 27). It aimed to understand how the participants relate to the treasured garment and the process by which that garment has become treasured. Semi-structured interviews are neither free flowing or rigidly structured, they are conducted according to a pre-prepared interview guide that focuses on specific themes (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009: 27) and maintains consistency.

#### **3.6.2 Interview Questions**

The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) given to participants before the interview requested that they identify their treasured garment, this meant that participants had time to consider what their treasured garment was and locate it in their wardrobe (or wherever the garment was stored).

The interview guide was structured into two sections, 'background questions' and 'treasured garment'. In each section, there are five questions with a series of

prompts for the researcher to encourage the participant to elaborate further or give more details. This allowed both for the participant to answer in the manner they wished, and for the researcher to elicit further explanation.

The background questions (BG1 – BG5) were important to find out about the participant's lives (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), to get to know them and build rapport. These were conducted in the living room or kitchen before moving into the bedroom to look at the wardrobe and address the questions specific to the treasured garment/s (TG1 – TG5). In practice, the location of the interview remained the same, either in the bedroom or the living room depending on the arrangement of the participant's flat, as some did not have a living room so the entire interview was conducted in the bedroom. In the multi-room environment, participants would leave the room to collect the treasured garment and bring it to show the interviewer, then, when requested to show the interviewer where the garment was stored they would move into the bedroom.

A list of interview questions and prompts is given in Appendix 4. The rationale behind each question is detailed below:

**BG1: 'Can you tell me a bit about yourself?'** Elicited basic information such as age, marital status, occupation without the use of a form as well as the person's relationship to their family/ friends and their interests/ hobbies.

**BG2: 'How do you feel about clothes and fashion?'** Steered the conversation towards clothing and fashion, albeit in more abstract terms. It deliberately included both the terms 'clothes' and 'fashion' to allow the participant interpret the question how they wished. It was also designed to see if they were avid followers of fashion or expressed no interest in it or fell somewhere in between.

**BG3: 'How would you describe your style?'** It was important to gain an understanding of how the participant described their style in their own words before talking about their treasured garment so that the treasured garment could be discussed in relation to the individual's style. It is also important to recognise that



individuals own opinion of their 'style' may not be the same as outside observers – that the messages about themselves people believe they are sending out with their clothing does not necessarily match other's perception (see Tseëlon, 1995; 2012). The last two questions in the 'background' section of the interview relate to acquisition and divestment of clothing.

**BG4: 'How often do you purchase clothing?'** This was to ascertain information about their buying habits and how they valued the clothing they bought. Did they, for example, buy a few but more expensive items, or lots of cheaper items? This provided context for how the acquisition of their treasured garment related to their usual buying habits.

**BG5: 'How easy/difficult do you find throwing clothing away?'** This question deliberately focused on divestment, to see if the participant had a tendency to 'hoard' or if they did not place much emotional value on the items of clothing they divested. Again, this provided important information for the contextualisation of the treasured garment in relation to the participants' other behaviours around clothing. This question was also designed to lead into the discussion of the treasured garment by discussing what other kinds of clothing were kept or divested of and how the participant felt about the process.

**TG1: 'Can you show me your treasured garment?'** This question was designed to assist a change in location, and to go and physically get the treasured garment from where it was stored. In the interviews instead of moving into the bedroom, the participant would go and fetch the garment from its place of storage and then return to the interview location, meaning that the change in location often did not happen until the participant was specifically asked to show where the garment was stored. The request to see the treasured garment allowed a break from the interview and material interaction with the garment.

**TG2: 'Tell me about your treasured garment?'** This question was left deliberately open to allow the participant to talk about their garment how they wished, without being led by the researcher. In both pilot interviews and the autoethnography, the

story around the purchase of the garment was prominent. This was not something that was expected initially, and is the reason that one of the prompts here related to the purchase of the treasured item. The prompts were designed to encourage both material and emotional engagement with the garment, by asking the participant to describe it and times when they have worn it. They also encourage reflection on the reasons that this garment is more highly valued than other objects in their wardrobe.

**TG3: ‘Tell me about where you store your treasured garment?’** This question facilitated a movement into the bedroom or place where the garment was stored. It allowed the participant to talk about the garment in relation to other items in their wardrobe and allowed the researcher to see inside the wardrobe or storage space.

**TG4: ‘What is the future for this item?’** The next question addresses the participant’s future intentions for the garment, whether they planned on keeping the garment or divesting of it, and, if they did decide to divest of the item, where would it go. This question encouraged reflection on how they would feel if the garment were to no longer be there.

**TG5: ‘Is there a garment that you wished you still had, that you would treasure if you still had it?’** The final question continued the theme of absence, with prompts relating to memories of the material garment itself, occasions of wearing and why the participant no longer has a previously treasured garment. This final question moves away from the material treasured object present and asks the participant to consider other objects that could or would be treasured. This provided an alternative point of departure for evaluating the evidence by seeking to understand how participants designated an item as treasured and their emotions in relation to garments they treasured but no longer own.

### **3.7 Garment Analysis**

The following sections detail the development of the checklists and how they were used in practice.

### **3.7.1 Checklist for Observation**

This checklist gathered information about the type of garment, its construction, the textile components, labels, brand, signs of use, alteration and wear and supporting material such as original packaging, photographs etc. The reason for this is to “secure enough factual information to be able to create a rich description of the artefact” (Mida & Kim, 2015: 29). It ensures that details are noted down methodically, which Mida and Kim call ‘the slow approach to seeing’ (2015: 29). The amendments that have been made to the Mida and Kim’s checklist relate to the fact that the garments this study is looking at are in wardrobes rather than museum collections.

The object analysis was conducted at the end of the interview with the participant present. It was originally envisaged that this would be done by the researcher alone, however, the participant was often present and assisted in finding the labels, arranging the garment to be photographed, and pointing out details/ damage. This had to be worked through relatively quickly as the researcher was conscious of taking up the participant’s time after the interview had ended. The interviews lasted between 1 – 2 hours and the garment analysis and photography took 20 - 30 minutes.

### **3.7.2 Checklist for Reflection**

The reflection after the examination had two stages; the first required the researcher to engage personally and sensuously with the garment, in order to identify any personal or cultural biases. The second required gathering and reflecting on contextual material such as images of similar garments, information about the designer or store that the garment came from and other fashions from the time (Mida & Kim, 2015: 31). This I conducted at home directly after the interview.

The first section of the ‘Checklist for Reflection’ concerns the weight, sound and smell of the garment, the sensory experience of it. It was important to pay attention to these sensual aspects during the garment observation. The checklist goes onto cover personal reactions to the garment and contextual information.

This stage can be seen as both part of the creation of data and as the first stage of data analysis. Mida and Kim's (2015) observation and reflection parallel McCracken's (1988) view that the first stage of data analysis should take the text on its own terms, and the second, relate those observations to wider literature and culture. See Appendix 1 for the amended checklist, and Appendix 5 for an example filled in.

### **3.8 Use of Photography and Field Notes**

Both photographs and video clips were taken of the treasured garment, where they are stored and how they are stored. These formed both a record for the researcher to work from and visual evidence towards the final thesis. Video clips were used to capture additional elements, including the garment in motion. The interviews were audio and video recorded, to allow non-verbal cues, gestures and body movements to be captured (Pink, 2004: 356). Woodward points out that the sensual relationship people have to their items of clothing means they are "often unable to verbalise why they love an item of clothing so much" (2007: 32); therefore visual recording of wardrobe interviews is necessary to capture sensual engagement with the garment.

As Klepp and Bjerk point out, "recording, photographing, and even handling the object itself contribute to the researcher's recollection and empathy, and provide opportunity for new knowledge" (2015: 378). Participants were asked if they had a photograph of themselves wearing their treasured garment in advance of the interview; when such photographs existed, they allowed the researcher to see the clothing on the body, how the item fitted and what other items it was worn with. The image also locates a specific occasion of wearing. The two pilot projects, in which both participants offered (unprompted) photos of themselves wearing the garment, demonstrated the benefits of this approach.

As Sarah Pink (2004: 361) noted, visual methods not only provide additional evidence for the fieldwork "but [their use] also expands the options to present the work to others". The visual media gathered during the interviews formed a body of evidence that could be referred to by the researcher whilst typing up the object

analysis and in relation to the interview evidence. It also gives the opportunity to present the work in a more visual way, allowing readers to see what these garments look like and where there was damage.

After each interview field notes were taken about the experience, noting down any additional remarks made by the participants and my reflections on the process. These brought to mind details that may otherwise have been forgotten and were referred to during the analysis process.

### **3.9 Technical Considerations**

An iPhone 7 Plus was used to audio record and video-record the interviews. The difficulty in video recording interviews was often related to the lighting of the rooms, and having a secure place to set up the camera. Following the pilot study a small tripod was purchased for use with the iPhone to better record the conversations. More attention needed to be given to the positioning of the participant in relation the lighting of the room, in order to get clear footage without shadows.

Taking photographs of the garments proved challenging, because it was hard to get a good shot of how the garment looked when not worn on a body. A number of different photography options were used: showing the dress flat on the floor or surface, the dress hanging on a hanger and close up shots of key details.

The movement of the participant when they were showing the garment or wardrobe was also a challenge for video recording, as the participant would move in and out of the frame and around the room. A solution to this was to have the second person assist with the operation of the video equipment. This allowed for both static and movement shots without breaking the flow of the interview for both the participant and researcher. The participant was informed and consented to any additional people attending in this capacity prior to the interview.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

### **3.10.1 Anonymization and Informed Consent**

Anonymity is often conflated with confidentiality; Benjamin Saunders et al. (2015) distinguish between the two defining 'confidentiality' as keeping information hidden from everyone apart from the research team. By this definition, this study protects the participant's confidentiality. Anonymity and anonymization is a more complex and variable process. Saunders et al. (2015) describe anonymity as a form of confidentiality, adding, "Anonymity is a continuum (from fully anonymous to very nearly identifiable)" (616). The anonymization in this study is towards the 'very nearly identifiable' end of this continuum.

The participants were all given the option to use either their first name or a pseudonym when being referred to in transcripts; all of them chose to use their first name. It was clearly stated on the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) and Consent Form (Appendix 6) that interviews would be filmed and photographs of both the person and the garment would be taken. They also supplied photographs featuring themselves in the garment and consented to this being published in the research. The participants also consented to the use of video clips of themselves and photographs to be shown in public exhibitions of this research, however, if this was to happen, the researcher would make contact with the participant to request additional informed consent.

Only the researcher had access to the video recordings. The level of anonymization is that only the first name has been used and the name of the street selected is a pseudonym will be referred to as being in 'South East London' rather than the specific locality. The participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

### **3.10.2 Interview Location**

The location of the interview, in the participant's home, raised ethical issues for both the participant and researcher. The participant was letting someone into their home, which is a private space. In order to build trust and communicate I was a neighbour, I followed up about the leaflets in person. This meant that participant and researcher had met face to face before the interview. The interview was structured to build trust and rapport, beginning in the more 'public' space of the home such as the kitchen or living room, before moving to the place the treasured garment is stored (usually the bedroom).

I was entering the home of someone I did not know well, so steps to ensure safety were taken by having an assistant accompany me. This was explained to the participant in both the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) and the Consent Form (Appendix 6). The ostensible role of the assistant was to carry out the filming and photography, but an important consideration was the avoidance of lone working. Gender was taken into account, and the 'filming/photography assistant' was the same gender as the participant to increase their sense of ease. The two individuals employed assisted only with the filming and photographing. They did not participate in interview or analysis.

### **3.10.3 Data Storage**

Data was stored in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act and 2018 GDPR. In line with GDPR, if the participant stated their full name it was removed from the video recording and transcript. Personal details such as their address was not recorded by the researcher and their phone numbers/email addresses were not saved to the researcher's phone, email or any other database.

Data was password protected and only accessed by the researcher, and guidance issued by Manchester Metropolitan University regarding data protection was fully adhered to. The recordings were stored digitally on a

laptop and backed up onto an external hard drive. The recordings will be kept and archived for potential future use as per the Manchester Metropolitan University guidance on Data Protection for research (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2018: Online) and inline with what the participants consented to.

### **3.11 Data Analysis**

A process of 'abduction' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), sometimes referred to as 'retroduction' (Crotty, 1998) or 'analytic induction' (Kawamura, 2011: 22), was used to thematically analyze the data. This section will explain the reasons for selecting abduction, and go on to discuss different approaches to thematic analysis and the approach that this research has taken.

There are three modes of inference, induction, deduction and abduction. Induction is often associated with empirical research and "distils a general rule from a set of observations" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 3). The main criticism of induction is that it requires "a risky leap from a collection of single facts to a general truth" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 3). Deduction, on the other hand, is often associated with theoretical work and does not require empirical work to construct an argument. Deduction "proceeds from a general rule and asserts that this rule explains a single case" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 3). Abduction has qualities of both induction and deduction, it allows for the presence of theoretical preconception alongside the empirical research and puts them in conversation (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 4). The empirical work informs the theoretical and vice-versa.

The literature review for this research identified a number of theories regarding why women keep clothes, along with three thematic areas of importance: identity, memory and value. As the analysis of the empirical work continued, observations were formed and related back to theories in order to map the research findings onto existing literature.



A thematic approach was used to analyse the evidence gathered, using Grant McCracken's (1988), five-stage approach for guidance. Pink (2007; 2009) has been used to think about the visual and the sensual in analysing the evidence and Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2009) ideas around reflexivity have been incorporated.

McCracken's (1988: 42) approach to analyzing evidence moves from the particular to the general in order to generate themes using observations from the interview transcripts. In preparation for analysis the evidence was collected, organised and transcribed. The five stages are summarized below:

- 1. Observation:** Treats each utterance on its own terms, ignoring relationships to other parts of the text to create an observation
- 2. Expanded Observation:** Develops the observations by themselves, in relation to the transcript and then to the previous literature and cultural review
- 3. Interconnection:** Examines the interconnection between expanded level observations – here the focus shifts from the transcripts to the observations themselves.
- 4. Themes:** Scrutiny of the observations to determine patterns, consistency and any contradictions
- 5. Theses:** Takes the patterns and themes as they appear across the interviews and adds a final process of analysis, looks at the themes across all of the evidence to see how they can be brought together in a thesis. (McCracken, 1988)

McCracken notes a benefit to this approach is that it creates a "record of the processes of reflection and analysis in which the investigator engaged" (1988: 43). This is advantageous because it can help to ensure reliability and transparency in the research and allows space for reflection.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) advocate reflexivity in research, however, they use the word 'reflexive' to mean something very specific. When other authors use the

term 'reflexive', they are referring to what Alvesson and Skoldberg define as 'reflective', which can "in the context of empirical research, be defined as the *interpretation of interpretation* and the launching of critical self-exploration of one's own interpretations of empirical material (including its construction)" (2009: 9 [original emphasis]). Some of the reflective elements of this study have already been discussed in the autoethnography and object analysis section. Reflexive research, as Alvesson and Skoldberg define it includes both "careful interpretation and reflection" (2009: 9). The authors stress the importance of recognizing the role of interpretation and construction at all levels of the research process, noting that the researchers own interpretation and constructions must be examined (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 295).

Rather than subscribing to a strict version of social scientific thought such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory or postmodernism, Alvesson and Skoldberg argue that elements from any or all of these traditions can be incorporated into research by building an 'interpretative repertoire' (2009: 270). They suggest a 4-element style of interpretation named 'Quadri-Hermeneutic', the four levels are:

1. Interaction with empirical material
2. Interpretation
3. Critical interpretation
4. Reflection on text production and language use (Alvesson & Skoldburg, 2009: 273)

The first two levels of this model will be described in this section and how this research engaged in the treatment of the empirical evidence and then interpreted that evidence. The last two stages provide additional levels of interpretation for the evidence that will be conducted in the findings chapters. The 'critical interpretation' stage requires an awareness of the political or ideological nature of the research and the 'reflection on text production' stage questions the researcher's own claim to authority (Alvesson & Skoldburg, 2009: 11). It is the interaction between these four

levels, and reflection on each level that produce *reflexive interpretation* (Alvesson & Skoldburg, 2009: 263). The evidence in this research was interpreted paying attention to these four levels and reflecting on how meaning is constructed by both participant and researcher.

Pink (2007) offers some strategies for working with visual elements that this research has adopted. Pink argues that video and photographs should not just be seen as illustrations of the research process and that they create different kinds of knowledge “images and words contextualize each other, forming not a complete record of the research, but a set of different representations and strands of it” (2007: 120). With this in mind, observations were made about both video and images in order to link them to the observations made about the text. Pink (2009) suggests that video and interview transcripts can be utilized to research the sensory by paying attention to how participants describe their sensual experience.

### **3.11.1 Stages of Analysis**

This study began with McCracken’s step-by-step approach, however, in practice found McCracken’s model too linear and does not allow for the process of moving between stages in order to analyse the evidence. The first stage, ‘observation’ is almost impossible in practice as naturally observations in the individual transcripts were related to previous reading, and, as the analysis went on, other transcripts. Therefore the ideas of Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) were adopted in the analysis method in order to make it more flexible and fluid. The below section discusses how evidence analysis progressed and notes where and how McCracken’s and Alvesson & Skoldburg’s templates for analysis have been followed.

#### **3.11.1.1 Interaction with Empirical Material**

The interviews were video recorded and transcribed. This enabled the transcription to capture non-verbal cues such as smiles and interaction with the garment in line

with Pink (2007). The transcription was completed within a week of the interview. This stage is the 'interaction with empirical material' identified by Alvesson & Skoldburg (2009). Throughout the analysis the original empirical material videos, transcripts and photographs were re-visited to in order to inform the interpretation and check for accuracy.

### **3.11.1.2 Interpretation I**

Each interview script was read in detail and annotated in a word document with comments and themes relevant to that interview. Then, the transcript and comments were re-read and comments relating to the transcript plus any relevant literature were added, this is the 'Expanded Observation' stage (McCracken, 1988).

This process was completed for some of the earlier interviews before the final interviews had been conducted and/or transcribed, this meant that as the interviews, transcriptions and analyses progressed, comments were also added which highlighted similarities between the transcripts. This also saw a movement between evidence collection and analysis as suggested by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009). This allowed the researcher to be alert to potential similarities/contrasts in future interviews.

### **3.11.1.3 Interpretation II: Interconnection and Themes**

This study utilized the computer software package Nvivo, a program that allows researchers to tag a digital archive of data, and group excerpts, images and videos into categories and themes. The coding, categories and themes are still created by the researcher and allocated manually; the programme allows ease of searching, organizing and comparing. Once all of the scripts had been read, noted and annotated they were uploaded to Nvivo in order to create codes/themes across the interviews. Each transcript was uploaded and relevant sections of each transcript were assigned to a 'code', some examples of codes were 'comfort', 'love', 'difficult to

divest', 'cost and value' (see Appendix 7 for a list of early codes). Nvivo shows how many quotes and from how many sources are in each code, so it is easy to see which codes/categories had the most quotes assigned to them (see Appendix 8 for Nvivo screen grabs). This is the 'interconnection' stage of McCracken (1988) as evidence from multiple transcripts were grouped together in a code.

Once all the codes had been created, similar codes were grouped together into themes. Attention was focused on the reasons for treasuring garments both given by the participant and inferred by the researcher. This was part of the 'interpretation' stage according to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009). In line with the theory of abduction (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009), the researcher moved backwards and forwards between different stages of analysis in order to test emergent themes. Following the creation of themes, these were grouped together to form super themes or categories (see Appendix 8 for super themes and subthemes). The super themes of acquisition, materiality, emotion and identity were identified. From the literature reviewed, it was expected that memory would play a larger role, however, memories of the treasured garment often fitted better into one of the super themes and remained in a sub theme under 'emotion'. Using the codes and themes created in NVIVO, a table was created to visually compare the themes and super themes.

Table 3.2, overleaf, shows the 11 key reasons that garments were treasured by the participants along the top and the names of the participants and their treasured garments down the side. An X is marked to show if that theme is relevant to that garment. As can be seen, many of the most treasured garments have an X in each box, showing that there were numerous, overlapping reasons for treasuring garments.

Table 3.2: Showing the themes and super themes, 'most treasured' garment is highlighted in red

Name	Garment (red denotes 'most treasured')	ACQUISITION	MATERIALITY			EMOTION			IDENTITY			
		Timing/ method of Acquisition	Uniqueness	Material Garment	Aesthetic Value	Carrier of Memories	Affective Resonance	Feel good wearing garment	Connection to Others	Connection to Self	Life Transition	Narrative
Bart	70s Shirt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
	Leather Jacket	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
	Ted Baker Hat				X	X	X	X		X		
	Scarf	X				X	X		X		X	
	Red Jumper	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		
Mark	Woolrich Parka	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
Zoe	Beaded Bag	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
George	Helmut Lang Jacket	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Scenic Art Shirt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Indian Skirt		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Rhuza	Animal Print Shirt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
	Katherine Hamnett T-Shirt	X		X			X	X		X		
	Charity T-Shirt	X	X		X		X		X			
	Cycling Leggings	X		X	X		X		X	X		
Morgan	Pink Scarf	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tom	Red Tin-Tin T-shirt	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ali	Yellow Vest	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Suit		X	X	X			X		X		
	Self Tie Box Tie			X			X	X		X		
Abbie	White 'Hawkes Bay' T-shirt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phoebe	Printed skirt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Stripy Dress					X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### 3.12 Summary

This chapter has described the reasoning and process behind the research design and approach to data collection. The methods selected were wardrobe interviews accompanied by an object analysis. Participants were recruited using a method referred to in this research as ‘the street’ and recruited participants with an equal mix of genders. The evidence was thematically analysed using abduction, moving between the findings from the literature review and the findings from the empirical evidence.

This methodology adds to the growing literature on Wardrobe Methods (Fletcher and Klepp, 2017) and presents a new variation that other researchers can use. By using and adapting methods usually found in dress history, the addition of the garment analysis can be seen as an extension of the method of the wardrobe interview because the object is not merely present, but being actively engaged with by both participant and researcher to systematically record the details of the garment which in turn, prompted additional information about or in relation to the garment from the participant. Paying attention to the other senses as ways of knowing (Pink, 2015) and using visual methods such as video recording and photographs the method used for this study has attempted to de-centre language as a primary medium of knowledge creation.

The analysis used evidence from both the wardrobe interviews and the object analysis in order to address aim 1 of the study “To determine why individuals treasure garments, what those garments are and how they become treasured” and aim 2 of the study “To examine the process by which treasured garments achieve and retain their status in comparison with other systems of valuing clothing”. Adopting a reflexive approach to the analysis allowed the researcher to move between analytic stages to test hypotheses and generate findings, which are presented in the following chapters.

## **4. The Participants and Their Treasured Garments**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the participants, their garments and findings concerning the participants as a group. The chapter begins by looking at the group's lifestyle and attitudes toward fashion and clothing. This provides the context for their wardrobe choices and how these touch upon wider views of urban living. The participants' understanding of treasured garments and the process of treasuring a garment is compared using information such as cost, how often the garment is worn, and where it is stored. The final section of this chapter introduces the participants and their garments.

### **4.2 The Participants**

Five men and five women aged between 21 and 44 participated in the study. All lived in the same two blocks of flats in South East London at the time of interview. All of the participants were working towards or already held a higher education qualification. Their professions were in the creative and third sector. None were born in London, but had moved from elsewhere in the UK or abroad. Their varied birthplaces (see Table 4.1) reflect the wide pull of a major city such as London.



**Table 4.1: Summary of participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of Birth<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>No. of Items selected</b>	<b>Interested in fashion</b>
<b>Bart</b>	39	Poland	Web developer	5	Y
<b>Mark</b>	33	Ipswich	Charity Fundraising	1	N
<b>Zoe</b>	26	Bristol	Events/ PR	1	Y
<b>George</b>	30	Buckingham - shire	Set designer/ bar manager	3	Y
<b>Rhuza</b>	34	Sofia, Bulgaria	Student/ artist and classroom assistant	4	Y
<b>Morgan</b>	30	Florida, USA	Charity Fundraising	1	Y
<b>Tom</b>	44	Norwich	Lecturer in Social Work	1	N
<b>Ali</b>	31	Moscow, Russia	Freelance opera singer/ musician	3	N
<b>Abbie</b>	22	New Zealand	Design Student	1	N
<b>Phoebe</b>	28	Norwich	Graphic Designer/ Animator	2	N

#### 4.2.1 Life Style/ Life Stage

The generational affiliation of the sample can be described as ‘Millennials’ or ‘Generation Y’. Although there is debate about this cohort, the Pew Research Center classes people born between 1981 and 1996, who would have been 22-37 years old at the time of this study, as Millennials (Dimock, 2019). Two participants, Bart and Tom fall outside this range. However, there is little difference in life stage; the participants are all single or recently partnered, childless, and either living with their partner or in a flat share in rented accommodation.

<sup>2</sup> Place of birth as stated by participant in interview, for participants born outside of the UK often the town was not given. In the case of Ali and Abbie, they were born outside of the UK but moved to the UK when they were under 5 years old.

All live in the same two blocks of flats with a communal patio and can be said to be part of a community. In their everyday life, they shared common frustrations regarding Wi-Fi reception, bin collection and property management. Some of the participants were on first name terms with one another and spent time together as friends. The location is not well served by the London Underground but has a number of bus routes and overground train connections. None of the participants owns a car; they either travel via public transport or cycle, with the majority opting to cycle. All of the flats follow the same layout, a sequence beginning at the front with a living room or bedroom, then bedroom, bathroom, smaller bedroom and a large kitchen at the back. Due to this relatively compact living situation, insufficient space was regularly cited as an issue affecting storing and keeping clothing.

South East London is seen as a place that is rapidly gentrifying. It was once undesirable but has become more popular in the last decade when young creative and twenty-somethings who found themselves priced out of East London moved south of the river. This popularity has recently been recognised, with Peckham being placed 11<sup>th</sup> on a list of the '50 Coolest Neighbourhoods in the World' and the only London neighbourhood on the list (Walker-Aronott, 2018). This has improved the image and increased the prices across South East London as a whole and has been dubbed "the 'Peckham effect' by the press (Prynn, 2019).

Much of the literature defining Millennials as a generational cohort is from a marketing perspective. Millennials have been said to:

- Be focused on saving

- Research before purchasing and want brands to align to their values

- Look to their network for recommendations

- Be concerned about health and environmental issues

- Value experiences over physical products (Ad Espresso, 2018: online)

In addition to this, “members of Generation Y have been described as more concerned than previous young generations about work-life quality than income, and as being more responsible, independent, and skeptical” (Wolfe, 2004 in Valentine and Powers, 2013: 598). In the UK, this generation is also referred to as ‘generation rent’ (Hughes, 2018) reflecting decreasing likelihood that they will own a property at the same age their parents did. This is a particular issue in London where the average house price is £542,445 compared to £229,000 nationally. Calculations show that one would need a household income of £84,000 and a deposit of over £100,000 to get on the property ladder in London (Kirkman, 2019). Therefore it is unsurprising that the participants are in long term rented accommodation.

This perspective is useful when considering how the participants of this study conform to the described characteristics of Millennials as an ‘ideal type’. Broadly speaking, the interview evidence with the participants does show alignment to all of the above categories, albeit with some caveats.

#### **4.2.2 Fashion and Personal Style**

A range of stances toward fashion was found:

I’m not particularly interested in fashion as in, following trends and stuff. (Abbie, 2018)

Fashion for me was always associated with a huge expense, I was more into looking for my own identity and style, that was fashion for me, of course I had to borrow from whatever the trend was around. (Bart, 2018)

I am very interested in erm, clothes and fashion, I think it’s a really wonderful subject, I think historically it’s fascinating, and also in terms of modes of dress and how people express themselves. (George, 2018)

I’m very functional when it comes to clothes, I’m not, I don’t follow fashions at all. (Mark, 2018)

I really, I enjoy it. I wouldn’t say I necessarily like follow runway type trends of fashion, but I like seeing how things evolve and erm, just kind of, I dunno, it’s been fun to sort of watch my own fashion kind of go through its iterations. (Morgan, 2018)

Five participants said they liked fashion; the others claimed no interest in fashion or trends. Those that expressed an interest felt positively towards fashion, but gave preference to a sense of their own style. A distinction between fashion and clothing came through strongly, with the search for a personal style they were comfortable in, outweighing following fashion trends. Fashion lovers expressed more enjoyment in selecting clothing or putting together different looks. All had a sense of what suited them, and discussed the type of items they bought regularly. Many of the participants reflected on how their style had changed over time. While individuality was important, so was fitting in with their peers. All were influenced by what other people wore.

#### **4.2.3 Environmental Concerns**

Aware of the environmental impact of clothing, most took steps to minimize their clothing footprint. Some participants found it difficult to reconcile their love of clothing and fashion with their ethical stance, both toward sustainability and the social conditions of clothing production. Anxieties about these impacts of fashion were expressed and limiting behaviours outlined:

Cause the, the evil side of fashion comes into, that's what hurts me the most [...] Like, the fact that fabrics are made of textiles and textures that are not biodegradable, [...] and it's a massive problem. (Rhuza, 2018)

I'll try and source ethically, so, I do, I do always try and think about where I'm buying stuff and the impact it has environmentally and socially, I really don't like shopping in high street shops where I think the, the factory culture and manufacturing culture is just so unspeakable that it doesn't even cross my mind to go there. (George, 2018)

I think that's another thing I'm aware of is like how transient like a lot of things are, like people throwing away endless...kind of things going out of fashion or... like the throwaway nature of fashion just really, I find quite repulsive, so I think that's part of why I try to not shop when I don't need to. (Phoebe, 2018)

All of the participants said that they did not throw away clothing, that they either gave it away to friends, sold it, gave it to a charity shop or used clothing recycling bins.

This environmental concern was also reflected in the amount of clothing the participants purchased. It was only Zoe who appeared to shop regularly; all the other participants had taken steps to reduce the amount of clothing they both owned and bought. To balance her shopping habits, Zoe re-sold items online or at car boot sales once she no longer wanted them. Mark, who purchased brands such as Levis and Dr Martens did so because he viewed them as better quality so he would be able to wear them for longer. Both Mark and Ali said they did not divest clothing until it was worn out. For the interview, Mark wore a pair of jeans that he had patched at the knee.

#### **4.2.4 Shopping**

The shops that participants frequented ranged from low- to mid-range high street brands, charity and vintage stores, and discount designer outlets. Specifically mentioned were mid-range high street brands ASOS, H&M, Toast and Anthropologie; mid-range brands Diesel, Ted Baker, Levis and Dr Martens; and outlets including TK Maxx and Bicester Village. Shopping online was also a significant source of clothing. Few found shopping enjoyable apart from those that browsed charity shops where unexpected finds offered excitement, and having no particular item in mind made the experience more relaxing.

A strong preference for buying second hand was shown by the participants. While a recent survey revealed that 20% of people purchased second hand clothing on a regular basis (Hughes, 2019), in this sample 50% did so. Participants who did not regularly purchase second hand clothing still owned some second hand garments and some selected a second hand item as one of their treasured garments.

There were three main reasons given for shopping in charity shops or second hand: cost, ethical beliefs and being able to find something unique. The appeal of charity shop shopping was summed up by Abbie:

Firstly it's like an environmental thing, giving clothes like, another life, erm, and because the clothes are more unique, and I kind of like the idea that someone else has lived in them and knowing that, like, maybe they've not done anything exciting wearing them, but the idea that there potentially could have been like a big adventure wearing those clothes I find quite exciting [laughs] and also it's a lot more rewarding I think when you find something that fits really well and that's...yeah, compared to like if anyone else could buy it, I guess, it's kind of like hunting for it. (Abbie, 2018)

Other second hand frequenters echoed Abbie's points. George linked his preference for charity shops to his time as a student "Obviously when you're a student in London you shop in charity shops" (George, 2018). And perhaps, for these participants who have creative jobs that may not be well paid this has carried on, George's statement also points to a cultural acceptance of charity shop and second hand style in London in particular.

#### **4.2.5 Price**

The participants were very price sensitive, with all of them mentioning the high cost of clothing and how they tried to shop in the sales, outlet stores or second hand. They all had similar conceptions of what an 'expensive' or 'cheap' item with few people willing to spend over £100. As Morgan succinctly put it to spend over £100 she would have to "Really think about it" (Morgan, 2018). When buying second hand the participants looked to spend under £20 per item, and when buying from high street stores, participants spent £20 - £60 per item. The most expensive item mentioned in an interview was a Hugo Boss coat purchased by Tom for £400; this was a rare purchase for him and bought at a discount. In general designer items were rare in the participants wardrobes; these were seen as a departure from their usual spending habits, and required a significant discount to bring them into range.

#### 4.2.6 Keeping and Divestment

There was a mix of 'keepers' and 'divesters' in the participant group; half struggled to part from their clothing and the other half found it easy, clearing their wardrobe on a regular basis. The divesters said they did not have emotional attachments to clothing in general (although this was different when it came to treasured garments), while keepers felt guilty about potential waste, retained things they might use 'one day', or because they felt emotionally attached. For these, divestment was an emotional loss, but one that could also reap emotional benefits:

I've been throwing stuff away and it's been a really therapeutic thing to do.  
(Mark, 2018)

There's a lot of clothes that I, have kept because it does give you that like memory or joy around it. Erm, and there's other things I've discarded which were probably...probably ok, although, yeah, I am a bit of a hoarder.  
(Phoebe, 2018)

I'm losing something nice, on the other hand, a certain memory is just gone, good or bad, good always stays but the bad, you know, um, and yeah and a big clear out and then you've got space for more. (Bart, 2018)

You're full of, kind of...objects and clothes and things that remind you perhaps of that and you kind of...it's maybe time to let go. (Rhuza, 2018)

I threw some stuff away the other day, um, and it hurt, like, it was really painful erm, but you, you grow out of stuff, you, things get replaced.  
(George, 2018)

There was agreement by all that some things were easier to get rid of than others, with basics such as white T-shirts being easy to divest of and gifts being more difficult. The time needed for sorting the wardrobe was a considerable barrier to divestment, although frequent house moves forced the issue. However, more crucial were social attitudes. Dissonance between the desire to keep clothing and social expectations to discard surfaced in the term 'hoarder', which was seen as a negative trait. Participants were aware of the literature of 'decluttering', especially Marie

Kondo's books (2011, 2017) that emphasize the emotional benefits of clothing divestment (see Section 6.6; Section 7.3.1).

Almost all the participants had recently had a 'clear out' near the time of the interview. There were a number of reasons for this: Mark was leaving the country so had organized all his things; Abbie had recently moved house; Zoe has regular clear outs; Morgan and Phoebe had used the Marie Kondo method; and Rhuza was planning to sell items online in order to gain more space and additional money. It was not clear whether the timing was mainly co-incidental or if some clear outs had been prompted by reflecting on treasured garments. As the flats are quite small, regular wardrobe pruning is considered almost a necessity. All of the participants discussed their clear outs and how they decided what to keep.

#### **4.3 Selecting a treasured garment**

Six participants commented that they needed time to consider what their treasured garment would be, while four knew instantly. For some participants the invitation postcard prompted reflection on their wardrobe and what items were special to them, something they had not previously considered.

When you put that postcard through the door, the conversations it opened up were fascinating, I think I said when you came round to talk about it, I had never thought about an item of clothing as treasured before, never, I thought about them as maybe sentimental? (Mark, 2018)

Mark distinguishes between 'treasured' in the sense that he understands it and 'sentimental'. In conversations with his housemates, they first tried to think of their own treasured garments and then moved on to considering a garment they most associated with each other. "Rather than thinking of what I was, what I treasured, it was what they attached to me" (Mark, 2018). Once Mark had identified his coat as treasured in this way, there was no other garment he could think of that he felt the same about.



The term treasured was not one that many of the participants used before the study. Morgan suggested her own word 'cosy' because it's my favourite word of all time, it is like, the thing that makes me the happiest is being able to feel like, cosy and comforted" (Morgan, 2018). Like Morgan, Tom also used his own word: 'affect': "...when you asked me to think of a treasured item [...] I thought no, [...] what actually has meaning in terms of...affect. And this immediately came to mind" (Tom, 2018). For both Morgan and Tom, their chosen garments were the first things they thought of when prompted by the question, but it was only in hindsight, that the garments appeared to be obvious choices. George came to think of as treasured after reflecting on what was special to him.

I only started thinking about it when you came round and we started talking about your project, And I was actually thinking about what's special to me, I went round the room and I was like, ok what's super special and I saw this and I was like yeah, that makes the cut. (George, 2018)

Mark's 'love', Morgan's 'cosy', Tom's 'affect' and George's 'special' highlight emotional connection with treasuring a garment. A key aspect for George was time, the jacket had been with him the longest. Even when not yet identified as treasured attachment to the garment existed, and when consciously applied, treasured made sense, it fitted.

#### **4.4 Overview of Findings**

The ten participants discussed a total of 22 garments, including a variety of garments types. Upper body garments were in the majority (T-shirts, shirts, jackets, coat, jumper and vest). Accessories were also prominent (scarves, bow tie, hat, bag and leggings), but surprisingly no footwear featured. Whole body and lower body garments were in the minority (dress, skirts, suit). The treasured garments were mostly casual clothes, with few formal items discussed.

**Table 4.2 Showing information about the participants' treasured garments** (Most treasured garments appears at the top of participant sections highlighted in red.)

Name	Garment	Acquisition			Wearing			Keeping			
		Gift or self purchased?	Where from?	Cost	Frequency of Wear	Where is it worn?	Marks of wear, damage and alterations	Length of Ownership	Storage location	Memories and associations	Future Plans
Mark	Woolrich Artic Parker	Self Purchased (2nd Hand)	Camden Market	£90	Often	Worn in winter, used as everyday coat	Lining is marked	2 years	On coat hook by door	Trip to Canada, break up with partner	Continue to wear, give to future child
Zoe	Beaded Bag	Gift	From father who purchased it 2nd hand in antiques shop	Gift (£25)	Occasionally	Special occasions and family events	Pulled threads and missing beads	9 years	On a hook in her room (on display)	Parents, family meal/ outings	Continue to wear, give to future child
Morgan	Pink Cashmere Scarf	Gift	From a friend, brand is Calypso St Bathes	Gift (£100)	Occasionally	Exclusively on airplanes/ travelling	Hole where the maker label was removed	5 years (approx)	Folded in drawer at bottom of wardrobe	Moving from NYC to London,	Continue to wear
Tom	Red Tintin T-shirt	Gift	From a work colleague who previously owned the shirt	Gift (price unknown)	Occasionally	Exclusively for travelling	Print is cracked, fabric is faded	23 years	Folded with other T-Shirts	Work and holidays	Continue to wear
Abbie	White 'Hawkes Bay' T-shirt	Gift	Used to be her Mother's, abbi requested item	Gift (free t-shirt)	Often	Worn to university, everyday, casual	Fabric has thinned and faded	4 years (approx)	Top of drawers	Childhood, family, university	Continue to wear
Phoebe	Long printed skirt	Gift	Trunk in parents attic, used to belong to her mother	Gift (price unknown)	No longer worn	Previously worn regularly Worn for parties and events,	Elastic has gone at waistband, split seam, several pulls to the fabric	8 years (approx)	On hanger in wardrobe	Moving in to her flat, parties, her mum	Get fixed in order to wear
	Stripy Dress	Self Purchased (2nd Hand)	Local charity shop	£5	Rarely	Work and on 1st date with partner	n/a		On hanger in wardrobe	Development of relationship with partner	May divest
George	Helmut Lang Jacket	Gift	From a family friend	Gift (£325 est )	Often	Used as an everyday jacket	Fading, rip in pocket	15 years	On his jacket rail	Coming out, figuring out how to wear it	Continue to wear, give to future child
	Scenic Art Shirt	Gift	From father, who previously owned the shirt	n/k	Often	Worn to work	Buttons missing, large rip, covered in paint	n/k	Hanger in the wardrobe/ back of chair	Relationship with father/ wearing to work	Turn it into a cloth
	Indian Skirt	Self Purchased (2nd Hand)	2nd hand shop specialising in Indian clothing, North East London	£15 (approx)	Occasionally	Worn on nights out and to festivals	Split at the waist, frayed at hem with dark stain around hem	n/k	In a storage box in bedroom	Feeling joyful, memories of nights out	Continue to wear, frame on wall

Ali	Yellow Moscow Hash House Harriers Vest	Gift	Previously owned by his father, taken without asking	Gift (price unknown)	Occasionally	Parties and nights out	Print is faded on the front and back, pulls in fabric	n/k	Folded at bottom of drawer	Russia, childhood, family, parties in London	Continue to wear, give to younger family member
	Suit	Self Purchased (New)	T.M Lewin	£200 (approx)	Often	Work and formal events	Trousers widened at the thigh	1 year	In suit carrier in wardrobe	Finding a suit that fit well	Continue to wear
	Self Tie Bow Tie	Self Purchased (New)	Shop in the City of London	£16	Often	Exclusively for work	n/a	n/k	In suit carrier pocket of formal suit	Identity as a performer	Continue to wear
Rhuza	Animal Print Silk Shirt	Self Purchased (2nd Hand)	Local charity shop	£2.50	Often	Variety of occasions - work, events, casual and smart	Frayed seams at the bottom of the shirt, New ceramic top button added	3 or 4 years	On a specific hanger in wardrobe	Compliments she has received when wearing	Continue to wear, make repairs to extend life
	Katherine Hamnett T-Shirt	Self Purchased (new)	Selfridges	£40.00	Often	Worn casually	n/a	n/k	Hanger in the wardrobe	Environmental concerns and ethical purchasing	Continue to wear
	Charity T-Shirt	Self Purchased (new)	From her Niece	£10.00	Rarely	Worn casually	n/a	n/k	Folded on wardrobe shelves	Her partner and her niece	Continue to wear
	Cycling Leggings	Self Purchased (New)	From her friend who runs brand 'No Such Thing as Bad Weather	£50.00	Often	Worn to cycle and to casual events	n/a	n/k	Folded on wardrobe shelves	Her friend's business and talent	Continue to wear
Bart	70s Shirt	Self Purchased (2nd Hand)	Camden Market	£10	No longer owns	Previously worn on nights out	Sweat stains at arm pit	14 years	No Longer has	Feeling like he looked 'cool, memoires of nights out	No longer owns
	Ted Baker Leather Jacket	Self Purchased (New)	Ted Baker, Westfield	£390	Often	Everyday use, variety of occasions	Sleeves shortened	3 or 4 years	In wardrobe on specific hanger	Feeling comfortable in any situation	Continue to wear
	Ted Baker Hat	Self Purchased (New)	Ted Baker, Westfield	n/k	No longer worn,	Previously worn on nights out	n/a	n/k	In 'messy drawer'	Feeling like he looked 'cool' memoires of nights out	Continue to keep
	Scarf	Gift	From father, brand unknown	n/a	Never worn	Never worn	none	n/k	In 'messy drawer'	His Father	Continue to keep
	Red Italian Military Jumper	Self Purchased (New)	Shop in Milan, Italy	n/k	Worn occasionally	Smart casual	n/a	n/k	In wardrobe on specific hanger	Holiday in Italy and a date	May throw away if it starts to smell

The ways that participants came to acquire their most treasured items, and the significance of this for treasuring is discussed in Chapter 5. Memorable aspects of acquisition emerged as a significant theme of interviews. As well as purchased special finds, both new and second hand, gifts featured in many treasured acquisitions (see 'Where from' and 'Cost' columns of Table 4.1). Gifts from family members were both items previously worn by the giver and items purchased for the recipient.

The majority of treasured garments were still in active use, sometimes worn often, although in the case of specific functionality, worn only occasionally (see 'frequency of wear column' of Table 4.1). Only one garment had never been worn. This contrasts with previous studies on clothing and value that have focused on clothing that is no longer worn (Banim and Guy, 2001; Bye and McKinney, 2007; Hertz; 2012). Rather than 'event' clothing, the treasured garments ranged from 'casual, everyday wear', seen as reliable items that could be thrown on and make the owner comfortable in most situations, work or leisure. This flexibility is a reason for frequent wear. Garments worn only in specific contexts were not just for party occasions, but included professional wear and clothes for travel.

Damage such as sun bleaching, stains, split seams and small holes were common in treasured garments, and they were worn despite their damage. The majority of garments showed signs of wear such as fading and fabric thinning, evidence of which was gathered both through interview and garment analysis.

Keeping was found to be both a physical and mental process. The physical keeping of clothing was recorded in both temporal and spatial aspects (see Table 4.1), but keeping associated with memory and imagination emerged as a more important indicator of treasuring (see 'Memories and Associations' and 'Future Plans' in Table 4.1). An item did not have to be in possession for a long time to be thought of as treasured. Lengths of ownership by the treasuring individual varied from one year to twenty-three, with most garments having been owned for less than ten years. This is not to say that length of ownership did not affect the relationship to the garment.

The study expected to find that treasured garments were stored separately or in a special way. However, the treasured garments were often stored alongside other similar clothes in the main wardrobe. The differentiating factor here was in relation to the clothes being in active use or not. Occasionally treasured garments were granted nicer hangers or more prominent display, but most important was having a place where it was known the treasured item could be found.

Treasured garments were broadly associated with positive memories, friends and family members, the participant's identity or a significant time in the participants lives. The majority of participants planned on keeping their treasured garments indefinitely; with many of them saying that they would keep their item even if they no longer wore it. Those who could see themselves divesting their item wanted to pass it down in the family. This reveals a profound attachment to the garments.

#### **4.5 Participants and their Garments**

This section introduces each participant and their garment(s). Biographical details and a summary of the participant's approach to clothing is followed by a description of their treasured garment(s), and why it is treasured. The most treasured garment is presented first if the participant chose to discuss multiple garments. Evidence from both interviews and object analyses is given.

##### **4.5.1 Bart**

Bart is 39 and has lived in London for 18 years. Originally from Poland he came to the UK to study in 2000, gaining two degree qualifications. He works as a web developer for an environmental and conservation association. Bart lives in the flat with his male partner and they have a pet dog. Bart is physically active, goes to the gym everyday; he is also a qualified personal trainer although he does not practice as such. He eats healthily and cycles to work and back. Bart describes his clothing style

as fitting around his lifestyle; he is often in casual clothes for the office, or gym kit and cycling clothes at other times. He said he had a difficult relationship with fashion, sometimes seeing himself as fashionable and not at other times. His favourite brand is Ted Baker.

### ***70s Black and White Polyester Shirt (No longer owned)***

This was a black and white polyester shirt with a silhouetted image of a woman on the front also incorporating the name of the designer (no image available). Bart's 70s shirt was purchased at Camden Market for around £10 as part of a costume for a fancy dress party. He subsequently wore it on nights out clubbing. Bart now regrets throwing it away, possibly due to pressure from his partner. If Bart still owned the shirt he said he would frame it for display. Bart treasured the shirt because of its authenticity as a 70s designer garment, the link to the times he went clubbing, and because it represented 'his style'.

### ***Ted Baker Leather Jacket***

With a classic motorcycle jacket shape darted at the waist and lightly padded shoulders, this jacket is styled by its central zip fastening and zipped pockets. The sleeves have been shortened to fit, and there are some small marks and patches of wear. After a long search for the 'right' leather jacket, it was purchased from Ted Baker for £390 around three years ago. Bart wears the jacket regularly and feels that it allows him to fit in to any occasion. It is stored in his wardrobe on a wishbone hanger to keep its shape. Bart plans to continue to wear this item as long as he is able to. Bart feels connected to this jacket not only because of the styling, the look and the brand, but because it fits his body well.



Figure 4.1: Bart's Ted Baker Leather Jacket

#### ***Other Treasured Items Discussed***



Figure 4.2: Bart's Ted Baker Flat Cap

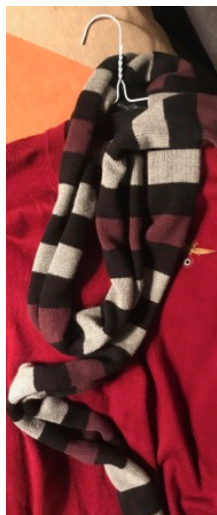


Figure 4.3: Bart's Striped Scarf



Figure 4.4: Bart's Red Military Jumper

### ***Ted Baker Hat***

Purchased from the Ted Baker store, Bart's denim flat cap is linked to his most treasured item, the 70s polyester shirt. Bart created an outfit based around the shirt that included the Ted Baker hat, 'Baklar' jeans by Diesel and army style boots that he wore to go clubbing. Bart was proud of this particular outfit and said it made him feel like he stood out when he usually liked to blend in.

The item is treasured because of how the outfit he wore it with made him feel and links to his personal style.

### ***Striped Scarf***

Knitted red, black and gray striped scarf.

The striped scarf was the last gift given to him by his father, Bart has never worn it but said he will always keep it.

His reason for treasuring this garment is the connection to his father and the emotion that it evokes.

### ***Red Italian Military Jumper***

Red V-neck jumper with yellow military insignia on the proper left chest.

Purchased whilst on holiday in Italy, Bart was drawn to this item because it had military styling and commented that it was an expensive item. Bart wears this jumper regularly but may stop wearing it if it starts to lose its shape or to smell. It is stored in his wardrobe on a hanger. There was a story or memory that stood out to him about this jumper, he bought the jumper to go on a date and his date arrived wearing the same jumper in blue.



Bart treasures this item because of the memory of the date, the holiday and that the jumper was part of 'his style'.

#### **4.5.2 Mark**

Mark is 33 years old and has lived in London for eight years. Originally from Ipswich he works in the charity sector as a fundraiser. He enjoys being outdoors and in his spare time goes outdoor swimming, camping and hiking, cycling is his primary means of travel. At the time of the interview he was about to leave the UK for between six months and one year to go and work in Canada. He is close to his family spending a lot of time with his sister who also lives in London. He describes his style as functional wearing plain jeans, T-shirts and hoodies. He buys brands such as Levis, American Apparel and Dr Martens because of their perceived longevity and quality. Mark hates going shopping and would rather be told by others what suits him and what he should wear. Mark searches for 'the perfect' version of all his clothing items so that they look good and are easy to replace. He finds it easy to divest of clothing when it wears out or he no longer wears it and gives unwanted clothing to charity shops or recycles.

Mark only discussed one item as 'treasured' in the interview, which was his Woolrich coat.

#### ***Woolrich Coat***

The coat is navy blue and 3/4 length. It is fastened with a zip and buttons down the centre and has two side pockets and two chest pockets that serve as hand warmers. It has a fur lined hood and is filled with 100% down, there is a label in the lining that reads 'Artic Parka the original, 100% down, insulation 40 degrees below' with space for a name which has not been filled in. There is a date on another label that reads 1976, but it is not clear what this date alludes to. The design of this jacket has remained very similar since its inception in the early 1970s. The jacket is worn

regularly in the winter. It is in overall good condition with some markings to the lining.



Figure 4.5: Mark's Woolrich Coat



Figure 4.6: Internal label of Woolrich Coat

Purchased for £90 from a vintage shop in Camden Market, Mark has owned his coat for two years. This kind of coat retails for around £800 if bought new. It was purchased because Mark needed a warm coat to go on a trip to Canada, a trip he had booked on a whim after breaking up with his long term partner. The jacket is worn regularly in the winter. The coat is stored on a hook by the front door with the other coats. Mark plans to continue to wear this coat for as long as he is able to and plans to pass it on to his future child.

Mark treasures this item because of its quality and performance and because he acquired it at a significant time in his life.

#### **4.5.3 Zoe**

Originally from Bristol, Zoe is 26 and has lived in London for three to four years. Zoe works as an events assistant for a creative events agency who work with fashion, lifestyle and beauty clients. She cycles to work everyday. She describes herself as 'from the countryside' and has always wanted to live in London. She likes fashion and going out socializing. Zoe describes her style as mis-matched and enjoys putting unexpected items together. She mainly shops online at ASOS or other similar high street shops.

Zoe loves fashion and clothes and had the highest monthly spend (£300) of any of the participants. She also had a high turnover of items in her wardrobe, buying items, wearing them a few times and then selling them again on re-sale sites such as Depop/eBay or at a car boot sale. She does not give any of her clothes to the charity shop because she sells them or gives them away to friends. Zoe does not think of herself as a hoarder and finds it easy to get rid of her garments. Zoe describes her relationship to clothes and fashion as 'intense' and sometimes resents how much time, energy and money she puts into thinking about what she wears.

Zoe discussed one item and knew instantly what it was.

#### ***Vintage Style Bag***

A small, structured clutch bag with a large metal clasp and decorative handle. It is a mid green silk with an oriental style jacquard pattern that includes hand beading. It also includes a chain so the bag can be worn over the shoulder. The bag is in good condition however some of the threads and beading are loose.



Figure 4.7: Zoe's Vintage Style Bag

Zoe's bag was given to her by her father as a Christmas present in 2009 after he had bought her mother a similar bag the year before and Zoe had taken a liking to it. He purchased it from a vintage and antiques shop in Bristol for £24.99. The bag is worn on special occasions or to family events. Zoe stores the bag differently to her other clothes, it is displayed on the wall in her bedroom. Zoe plans to continue to use the bag on special occasions and plans to pass it on to her future children.

The garment is treasured because Zoe sees it as unique, irreplaceable and something that connects her to her parents and home.

After carrying out the garment analysis and subsequent research into the object, I found that Zoe's bag is a mass-produced vintage style re-production, available for sale on a number of independent websites.

#### **4.5.4 George**

Originally from Buckinghamshire, George moved to London to study art, first at Central St Martins and then at Goldsmiths. His artistic practice includes costume design, fashion drawing and performance. He works freelance as a theatrical scenic artist and event bar manager. George has a fluid approach to dressing and will often mix womenswear with classic menswear, for example a fitted suit jacket with a long satin skirt. He alters his own clothes, customizes them and makes accessories.

He buys the majority of his clothing from charity shops, only purchasing basics new. When he does purchase new clothing, he tries to ensure that is from more ethical, environmentally friendly brands. George has a lot of clothes and finds it difficult to get rid of things and has been labeled a 'hoarder' by friends.

George selected three items that he thought of as 'treasured' and said at the end of the interview that "they highlight the sort of eclectic way that I look at clothes quite nicely" (George, 2018). In choosing three garments, George was able to talk about different aspects of himself, his style and his identity.

#### ***Helmut Lang Jacket***

A classic all-cotton denim jacket shape in a sandblasted brown colour, by Helmut Lang. The jacket shows signs of wear; a hole is torn in the proper left front pocket and there is fading across the shoulders, elbows and neck.



Figure 4.8: George's Helmut Lang Jacket

A family friend gave the jacket to George when George was in his late teens. The friend often gave George his old clothing so this jacket was one of many pieces he received. The same jacket was found secondhand online retailing for £325. George did not like the jacket when he originally got it, only beginning to wear it later, he now wears it regularly on a variety of occasions describing it as his 'go to' jacket. He plans to give it to his future children when he can no longer wear it. The jacket is stored on George's 'jacket rail' or over a chair as he wears it so often.

The reasoning George gave for treasuring this garment was that it grew on him over time, and, out of the three discussed, it is the one he wears most often.



### ***Other Treasured Items Discussed***



Figure 4.9: George's Scenic Art Shirt



Figure 4.10: George's Indian Skirt

### ***Scenic Art Shirt***

A light-blue striped cotton men's business shirt with patch pocket over the left breast. Damage to the shirt includes multiple paint stains, missing buttons, and a large tear near the right hem.

George describes this shirt as being 'forced on me by my father' (George, 2018). George's father gave George the shirt to wear for a meal with his father's friends. George kept the shirt and he has worn it to all of his scenic art painting jobs. This means that the appearance of the shirt changes, with every new job there are new paint stains and marks added to it. George knows this garment will not last and will

eventually break down because it is so damaged, he plans to use it as a cloth for painting when he can no longer use it as a shirt. The shirt is stored on a hook or over a chair in his room so it is easily accessible.

The shirt is treasured because George likes the story of its acquisition, because it reminds him of all the different jobs he has done and because he sees it as a beautiful object.

### ***Indian Skirt***

A long royal blue satin skirt with gold and pink floral embroidery. The waist is fastened and can be adjusted by a drawstring. There is a tear at the seam at the waist underneath the string. The skirt has dark staining, rips and fraying around the hem.

The Indian skirt was purchased from a second hand Indian store in Walthamstow for about £15. George explained that the skirt would traditionally be worn by a woman under an outfit or skirt, but that he wears it to parties and festivals. It is stored in a plastic storage box with his other Indian fabrics and saris. George will continue to wear this item in the short term but is worried about further damage to it, he plans to put it in a box frame and display it over his bed.

George treasures this item because he loves it and he said he feels joyful when he wears it.

### **4.5.5 Morgan**

Morgan has lived in her flat for just over a year. Originally from Florida, USA, Morgan moved to New York City to work in public relations before moving to London to undertake a Masters in Global Health and Development. She is 30 years old and currently works for a charity in London. The only family she has in the UK is her husband, with whom she shares the flat, the rest of her family live in the US. Morgan



mentioned that all of her friends in London are ones she knows from her Masters study. She spends her spare time training for half marathons and cooking/ baking.

Morgan describes her style as 'preppy' and says that she wears a lot of black because it is easy. She shops at high street shops such as Zara, H&M and Anthropologie.

Morgan revealed a penchant for dresses, especially event dresses, while most of her clothes are plain/ black, she described her collection of dresses as 'fun' and enjoys getting ready to go to events such as weddings and formal parties.

### ***Cashmere Scarf***



Figure 4.11: Morgan's Cashmere Scarf

The scarf is bright pink and 100% cashmere, it is long (175cm) and wide (65cm) so can also be used as wrap. There is a small hole at one end of the scarf where the label used to be otherwise it is in good condition.

Morgan's scarf was given to her by a friend as a leaving gift when she moved from New York to London. It was purchased from Calypso St Barthes and retailed at \$100.

The company Calypso St Barthes creates travel inspired clothing and went into administration in 2018. The scarf is only worn when Morgan travels by plane, which she does about five or six times per year to visit family and friends in America. Morgan's cashmere scarf is stored in her drawer underneath her wardrobe, it is with her other scarves and near to the back because she does not use it that often, but also likes to know exactly where it is so she can find it when she is packing for a trip. Morgan plans to continue to wear the scarf for travelling.

The scarf is treasured because of the feelings it evokes in her, the timing of the gift, who the givers were and that it has a special function for her as her 'travelling scarf' which endows it with a 'magical quality'.

#### **4.5.6 Rhuza**

Rhuza has moved from Bulgaria to London 2002 and has lived in her flat for 8 years. She shares the two bed flat with two housemates so there is no living room. Her partner is a filmmaker and she has a close relationship with her friends, many of whom are artistic or creative. She currently works as a teaching assistant at a school and aims to start an Art Psychotherapy course. In her spare time she makes ceramics and jewellery in a rented studio space. Rhuza describes her style as eclectic and wears a lot of bold prints and colours, she often shops in charity shops but also buys mid range designer items from brands such as Fiboricci and Calvin Klein. She used to shop a lot but has recently tried to cut down. Rhuza finds it difficult to divest of clothing but has started to sell some on resale sites to give her more space because she believes she has more clothes than she needs. The ethical side of fashion concerns her and she tries to shop and care for her clothing sustainably.

Rhuza selected four items to discuss and her animal print shirt as her 'most treasured' garment.

### ***Animal Print Shirt***



Figure 4.12: Rhuza's Shirt (front view)



Figure 4.13: Rhuza's Shirt (back view)

The shirt is 100% silk and printed images of leopards, tigers, zebras and lions in long grass with a black, white, brown and deep yellow colour pallet. The shirt is loose fitting with bell sleeves and button through fastening. The maker label says 'Vivaldi'. This shirt is in good overall condition, the seams a starting to split at the hem and the top button has been replaced with a ceramic button made by Rhuza.

Purchased for £2.50 from a local charity shop, Rhuza has owned her animal print shirt for three to four years. The shirt is worn often and to a variety of occasions including work, parties and other events. Rhuza plans to continue to wear the shirt as long as it fits her. The shirt is stored on a hanger in her wardrobe, she selects a nicer hanger for this garment.

The shirt is treasured because of how it feels to wear and the perceived uniqueness of the pattern and design.

### ***Other Treasured Garments Discussed***



Figure 4.14: Rhuza's Katherine Hammnet T-Shirt



Figure 4.15: Rhuza's Charity T-Shirt

### ***Katherine Hamnett T-Shirt***

Plain, navy blue oversized cotton T-shirt designed by Katherine Hammnet

Purchased from Selfridges on sale for £40, Rhuza wears this T-shirt on a regular basis. Rhuza bought this T-shirt because of the values of the Katherine Hamnett and because she believes it was ethically made.

The item is treasured because it aligns to her ethical values and she had particularly wanted a Katherine Hamnett T-shirt.

### ***Charity T-Shirt***

White crew neck T-shirt with smile design on front chest

Purchased because her partner's 10-year-old niece had designed it and sold the T-shirts for a charity.

Treasured because of the connection to her partner, his niece and her creativity

***Cycling Leggings (no image)***

Black shiny leggings with a reflective strip on the side of each leg.

Purchased for £50 from her friend's company 'No Such Thing As Bad Weather' which makes ethical, sustainable cycle clothing.

They are treasured because Rhuza feels she supporting her friend's business and the values of that business that align to her own.

**4.5.7 Tom**

Tom is 44 years old, moved to London in 2008 and has lived in the flat with his wife for five years. Originally from Norwich, Tom works at a university as a Social Work lecturer. He has lived in various parts of the country and previously worked as a Youth Worker and Social Worker. He is active and regularly cycles and goes to the gym. Tom mostly wears blue jeans, plain T-shirts or gym kit but also owns a number of designer 'statement pieces'. His style is informed by youth cultures he was a part of such as rave and football casuals. Tom rarely shops for clothes, when he does it is online with a discount code or in a designer discount store such as TK Maxx or Bicester Village. Tom finds it easy to divest of clothing but struggles to find time to get round to it.

### *Tin Tin T-Shirt*



Figure 4.16: Tom's Tin Tin T-Shirt

The T-Shirt is light red in colour with the words 'Tin Tin a New York' written above a scene showing Tin Tin and Snowy on the back of a boat looking towards the New York skyline. There is a date of 1993 and a copyright symbol at the base to the image. The size label reads XL. For a T-shirt of this age it is in good condition, there is slight pulling on the neck rib, the colour has faded to an almost pink and the white on the print has cracked but the other print colours remain in tact.

A work colleague gave this T-shirt to Tom after Tom complimented the colleague on it. Tom acquired the T-shirt in 1996 and it is a couple of sizes too large for him. The T-shirt was kept but not worn for years, but now Tom wears it whenever he is going on holiday or travelling. The T-shirt is stored folded with his other coloured graphic

T-shirts. Tom will continue to wear the T-shirt until it is too damaged to continue wearing.

The garment is treasured because of how he got it, the time he got it and what it has subsequently gone on to mean to him. It reminds him of the job he used to do and Tom associates the T-shirt with feelings of altruism and a time of change in his life.

#### **4.5.8 Phoebe**

Phoebe moved to London to go to university in 2008 and moved to her flat in 2012. Originally from Norwich, Phoebe is 28 and works as an animator and illustrator at a design studio. She lives with her male partner, although at one time there were three couples sharing the two bedroom flat. She has family close by and his friends with her neighbours. In her spare time she practices yoga and enjoys gardening. Phoebe favours bright colours and patterns in her clothing choices. Phoebe feels guilty spending money on clothes, she shops in charity shops and orders from brands such as Cos and Toast when they are on sale. She likes the creative expression that clothing offers her but doesn't think 'fashion' is 'for her'.

Phoebe discussed two items, designating her floral skirt as her 'most treasured' garment.



### ***Floral Skirt***



Figure 4.17: Phoebe's Floral Skirt

Long, full skirt with large pleats coming from the middle of the waistband. The waist has a flat panel at the front and is elasticated at the back, the elastic has become stretched so it no longer holds its shape. The print is bold abstract floral using bright pinks, blues, greens and oranges on a white background with a contrasting blue horizontal stripe border at the hem. The maker label reads 'Ayesha Davar' and another smaller label says 'made in India'. The skirt is 100% viscose and soft to the touch. The garment shows signs of wear and damage, there are also a number of pulls to the fabric and split seams on the hem and left hand side as worn. 'Ayesha Davar' is a brand that was famous in the 70s for its hippie inspired designs, it is a recognized brand on vintage resale sites and commands prices of £50 - £100.



Phoebe discovered this skirt in a trunk in her parent's attic, it originally belonged to her mother and Phoebe asked if she could have it. The garment used to be worn regularly for parties and special occasions but is no longer worn because the elastic has stretched in the waistband and needs repairing. Phoebe would like to wear the skirt again once it is repaired. The skirt is hung up in her wardrobe, which is organized by length from left to right, so this garment goes towards the left.

The garment is treasured because of its link to her family, the design/print and Phoebe felt she looked and felt good in it. She said she could stand out whilst still being 'covered up' which was something she enjoyed.

***Other treasured garment discussed - Stripy Dress***



Figure 4.18: Phoebe's Stripy Dress

Dark navy cotton jersey dress with thin yellow horizontal stripes, there are panels down each side with a chevron pattern and three quarter length sleeves. The fabric is thick with added stretch and designed to be closely fitted to the body. The maker label is 'Toast'.

Phoebe bought this dress from a Cancer Research charity shop for £5. The dress is worn occasionally; it is one of her smarter items that she wears to work. She also wore it on her first date with her partner. She has mixed feelings about this dress, she said she found it comfy but also clingy, and that she felt 'on show' wearing it. She said she had to be feeling confident to wear it and that she would be open to divesting of this item if it no longer 'sparked joy' for her. The dress is stored in her wardrobe, near to her floral skirt because they are a similar length.

The dress is treasured because she associates it with her first date with her partner.

#### **4.5.9 Abbie**

Abbie is 21 and originally from Sussex, she moved to London to go to university and study Design. Abbie's parents had jobs that required a lot of travel, Abbie was born in Australia, and her two siblings were born in Hong Kong and New Zealand. She previously lived in the flats with her brother, but has since moved to a new home close by. In her spare time she goes climbing, horse riding and charity shopping. Abbie describes her style as eclectic and says she wears bright colourful clothing because it makes her happy. Her clothing is purchased from charity shops, with the exception of shoes. Charity shopping is a conscious and ethical decision for Abbie and something that she enjoys. She buys clothing regularly, but also donates clothing back to the charity shops regularly as well, she described her wardrobe as having a 'high turnover'.

Abbie only chose one item as her treasured garment and knew instantly what it would be.

### *Hawkes Bay T-Shirt*



Figure 4.19: Abbie's Hawks Bay T-Shirt

A large white T-shirt with a large multicoloured graphic print and the words 'Hawkes Bay Exhibition Centre Museum New Zealand'. The T-shirt is 100% cotton, however the material has thinned over the years. It is in an acceptable condition for its age, the white has discoloured slightly, the rib at neck has some small splits, the print is still in excellent condition. There is a label at the back neck but the information is no longer visible.

Abbie remembered her mother wearing this T-shirt when Abbie was a child and asked if she could have it. Abbie's grandmother was an employee at Hawkes Bay Exhibition Centre and staff wore this T-shirt as uniform. There were only 100

produced and the designer of the print was a local artist although their name is unknown. The T-shirt is worn regularly to university and was described by Abbie as her 'signature' look. The item is stored at the top of her drawers because it is worn often. Abbie worries about its longevity and is conscious about how much she washes it.

The T-shirt is treasured because of the link it provides to her family, because she sees the item as unique and representative of 'her style'.

#### **4.5.10 Ali**

Ali is a freelance opera singer and musician who has lived in his flat for nine years. His father is English and his mother is Russian so Ali spent his early childhood in Moscow. He is 33 years old and shares his flat with his male partner George, who is also a participant in this study and two of his sisters live close by. In his spare time he practices various musical instruments and socializes with friends. Ali describes his style as practical but formal if he needs to be. He rarely purchases clothing and when he does he always looks for the item secondhand before buying new.

#### ***Moscow Hash House Harriers Vest***

A dark yellow running vest with red contrast trim on the arms neck. On the front is a printed graphic of Mickey Mouse putting his middle finger up to a red star, underneath the words 'Moscow Hash House Harriers' is written. On the back in large letters are the words 'On, On'. The vest is in good overall condition, there are a few minor pulls to the fabric and the 'On, On' print on the back has signs of fading. The material is 50% cotton and 50% polyester and feels quite rough to the touch.



Figure 4.20: Ali's Vest (Front View)



Figure 4.21: Ali's Vest (Back View)

Ali's vest originally belonged to his father and Ali took it home with him when he had visited and has owned it ever since. Ali's father was a founding member of the Moscow Hash House Harriers running club, an organization that still exists today. Ali has strong memories of these T-shirts and vests from his childhood and remembers them always being around. Ali wears this vest for parties and nights out, but only occasionally. It is stored in at the bottom of one of his drawers. He plans to continue to wear the vest and then pass it on to a younger relative in the future.

It is treasured because of the connection to his family and identity that it provides.

### ***Other Treasured Garments Discussed***



Figure 4.22: Ali's Suit



Figure 4.23: Ali's Bow Tie

#### ***Blue Suit***

A navy blue, single breasted suit made from 95% wool and 5% cashmere. It is labeled as 'slim fit', the trousers have been altered to give more room in the thigh.

Purchased new from T.M Lewin, the price had been reduced from £400 to just over £200. The suit was purchased to attend a friend's wedding, however, Ali now also wears it for work and other formal events. He will continue to wear the suit until it no longer fits or is damaged, he sees himself wearing it for at least ten years.

The garment is treasured because of how well it fits.

#### ***Bow Tie***

A black, silk self tie [not clip on] bow tie

Purchased new for £16 from a shop in the City of London when Ali was on the way to an event. It is worn with a tuxedo for his most formal performances and events. It is

stored in the front pocket of the tuxedo suit carrier along with sheet music and a metronome. He will continue to wear the bow tie until such a time that it is no longer required.

Ali feels that the act of tying his bow tie is an integral part to his preparation as a performer and treasures it because of its link to his identity as an opera singer.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The participants have been broadly defined as Millennials, and age group which is understudied in relation to relationships with clothing, previous research has either focused on older people (Slater, 2014; Buse and Twigg, 2016), students/young people (Hertz, 2011) or include a range of ages (Banim and Guy, 2001; Woodward 2007). Their concern for the environment and choosing brands that reflect those concerns, their price sensitivity, the high regard in which they hold friends' opinions all reflect the characteristics of Millennials discussed (Ad Espresso, 2018). The Millennial trait of 'valuing experiences over things' could be questioned, although, many of the participants said they were taking steps to reduce the amount they owned and purchased, and their clothes were used as part of experiences (such as Mark's coat).

The particular area of South East London could also be significant, as this area is currently gentrifying rapidly. The participants represent creatives who move into areas because they are affordable, often seen as the first stage of gentrification (Blasius et al., 2016: 50). The preference for secondhand shopping and cycling is common for people of this demographic in this area. A study of a different age group in a different location may produce different findings.

For the participant group, treasured garments were rarely of great monetary value. This was not unexpected, as the literature review showed that people retain clothing for a variety of personal reasons and assign personal value to objects. Very few of the participants' treasured garments were purchased new, or if new, by the



participants themselves. Only three participants bought their treasured garment themselves and of those only one as a 'new' item. For the others, the garment used to belong to someone else, what is interesting here is that only some of these were formal 'gifts' as we understand them, one person selecting an item to give to another person. The story of the acquisition was something that all of the participants recounted, how they came to own the item was significant for them in why they now thought of it as treasured.

The participants in this study treasure their garments for multiple, overlapping reasons. There is no one reason or quality that has led to the designation of an item as 'treasured', the reasons given for treasuring a garment are often linked to the individual or familial identity of the participant and the garment is seen to, in some ways, represent a part of themselves or their lives. There is also the consideration of the garment itself, how it feels to touch, how it smells, how it looks both when being worn and not being worn. Finally, there is the emotional attachment to the garment, this is in the form of feelings of love for the item or memories of how they acquired the garment, who gave it to them or where they wore it. These categories highlight the ways in which personal and sentimental value is built in treasured garments and will be discussed in the coming chapters.



## 5. Acquisition

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how the participants came to own their treasured garments and the entanglements of acquisition in the process of treasuring. My analysis identified different modes of acquisition that were found to influence how the participant viewed the garment. A basic distinction was made by participants between acquisition by gift, and acquisition by purchase. Nine of the treasured garments were received as gifts and thirteen were self-purchased (see Table 5.1). In the case of gifts, it was found that the person doing the giving (relative/ friend/ acquaintance) is important. For purchased items, second hand or new status was a significant factor. There was a further distinction involving items bought from a friend. Although six treasured garments were purchased new, it is noteworthy that none of these were the participants' *most-treasured* garments. These findings are discussed here within the broader context of exchange, so it is important to begin by reviewing theories of exchange.

**Table 5.1. Acquisition methods for the garment**

<b>'GIFT'</b>	<b>SELF-PURCHASED</b>
<i><b>From a family member</b></i>	<i><b>Second hand</b></i>
Bart's scarf	Bart's shirt*
Zoe's bag*	Mark's coat*
George's shirt	Rhuza's shirt*
Ali's vest*	George's skirt
Phoebe's skirt*	Phoebe's dress
Abbie's T-shirt*	
<i><b>From a friend</b></i>	<i><b>From a friend</b></i>
Morgan's scarf*	Rhuza's charity T-shirt
George's jacket*	Rhuza's leggings
<i><b>From an acquaintance</b></i>	<i><b>New from a shop</b></i>
Tom's T-shirt*	Bart's Ted Baker hat
	Bart's military jumper
	Bart's leather jacket
	Rhuza's navy T-shirt
	Ali's bow tie
	Ali's suit

(\*) denotes most treasured garment

## 5.2 Theories of Exchange

In most anthropological and material culture literature, exchange is divided into two broad groups, commodity exchange and gift exchange. Anthropologist David Graeber (2001: 32) sums up the distinction between commodities and gifts: "while commodity exchange is concerned with establishing equivalencies between the value of objects, 'gifts' are primarily about relations between people". These distinctions have been largely studied in the context of two different types of societies: so-called 'traditional' societies which are designated by anthropologists as gift economies, and modern capitalist societies based on commodity exchange. Researcher on materialism, Russell Belk, describes this as the 'two world view' (2010: 722).

A commodity is defined as anything that is made available for sale or trade (Appaduari, 1986). Commodities are exchanged for something of an equivalent

value, usually and predominately money, and that exchange, the giving of one thing and receiving of another happens within a short time frame, “ideally, the exchange is simultaneous so that there is no lingering debt to tie the parties to one another (Belk, 2010: 718). The individuals enacting the transaction are only connected by the exchange and will not need to encounter each other again. Money is used as a way of representing the equivalent value of commodities.

Marcel Mauss ([1925] 1969) laid the foundations for anthropological theories of gift exchange in ‘An Essay on the Gift’. Mauss was discussing pre-industrial societies in which money is largely absent and the system of exchange is not commodity based. Mauss found that gift exchange built social groups within society. A key finding was that the gift represents the relationship between the giver and receiver, and the gift continues to contain something of the giver (Carrier, 2013: 374; Graeber, 2001: 35). James Carrier developed this notion to include the recipient claiming that the gift “carries the identity of the giver, the recipient and their relationship” (2013: 376). Therefore, gift exchange not only creates social ties, linking giver and receiver, but cements those ties in a longer relationship in which the gift continues to remind the recipient of the giver (Graeber, 2001: 27).

Mauss also found that gifts usually entail an expectation of reciprocity that, whatever the society, conform to social rules and norms that govern giving and receiving. Carrier terms this the “trio of obligations that appears to exist in all societies: to give, to receive and to reciprocate in the appropriate ways on the appropriate occasions” (2013: 374). For example in modern British society, if a person gives another person a birthday gift, the expectation of a return gift is often present. In Western capitalist societies it is customary when giving gifts to obscure the commodity status, this is achieved with actions such as removing the price tag, wrapping in decorative paper and the creation of ceremony around gift exchanges (Carrier, 2013: 380).

Graeber describes how Bourdieu re-interprets Mauss by focusing on the pretence of generosity and the expectation of reciprocity. The argument is that gift exchange

and commodity exchange are similar; the only difference is that in commodity exchange the expectation of reciprocity is obvious (the price) and in gift exchange it is hidden by social custom and the delay in reciprocity. This point of view arises from a perception of humans as rational and self interested, a perspective dominating current economic and anthropological theory (Belk, 2010), in which all human behaviour is viewed as maximizing benefits to the self. From this perspective gifts are not seen as altruistic but as self-interested.

In contrast, Bronislaw Malinowski defined 'pure' or 'free' gifts as entailing "an act, in which an individual gives an object or renders a service without expecting or getting any return. The most important type of free gifts are the presents characteristic of relations between husband and wife, and parents and children" (Malinowski, 1922: 177, cited in Corrigan, 2008: 125). Therefore, family members are more likely to give gifts without expectation of return. Referencing the work of Marshall Sahlins, Carrier (2013) explains that the closer you are to a person, the more likely you are to treat them well in a gift exchange.

However for Sahlins (1972) the generous giving and sharing in the family is not without the expectation of reciprocity; it is that no one is keeping count of gifts given and received, this is referred to as 'generalized reciprocity' (Belk, 2010). Corrigan (2008) found, in family units in modern western societies, there is usually an internal family 'gift economy' and it is rare that members buy and sell things to each other; instead there is an environment of sharing and giving.

Borrowing from legal and economic language, the status of the gift is often described in terms of alienability. In a pure commodity transaction the individuals have no relationship apart from the exchange, and the objects themselves are alienable, that is, they can easily be resold or exchanged again. Conversely, pure gifts sustain relationships through the balance of indebtedness, and the spirit of the gift means that it is placed outside of exchange, or made inalienable. To sell a gift breaks cultural rules and risks censure.

Belk's (2010) conceptualization of sharing can be usefully added here. While others have merged sharing with gift exchange, Belk sees sharing as distinct from both gift giving and commodity exchange as the shared items are jointly owned and used. Belk states that "sharing is likely to involve caring and love" (2010: 720) and that sharing as a practice, especially in the family, is taken for granted because it does not have the formal rituals of gift giving (724). The key point about sharing for Belk is that it is non-reciprocal because the items are pooled.

In modern societies, exchanges fall along a continuum between the perfect commodity and the perfect gift. For example it is possible to have a commodity exchange between friends or a gift exchange between strangers. Belk argues that "lines between gift giving, sharing, and commodity exchange are imprecise" (2010: 718). Such grey areas were found in the acquisition of treasured garments.

### 5.3 Gifts

In popular imagination and in Western practice, a gift is something that the giver has purchased especially for the recipient, usually given at an occasion (Carrier, 2013: 380). In this study, different modes of giving and receiving from the usual *market gift*, one purchased for the recipient from a shop (Corrigan, 2008) were encountered. For example, there were several instances of participants requesting a particular item from their parents, or, taking an item from the family home without asking. A taken item is a gift in the sense that it is not commodified, and there is no request for return. There was an *unexpected* gift, that is one presented in the absence of the usual tight social bonds, which does not incur an obligation to reciprocate. There was a *forced* gift, one presented under obligation to accept although unwanted; this term was adopted from the participant's own testimony. The categories of gifts identified in the study are shown in Table 5.2 below. It is instructive to note whether the gift was an item the giver already owned, or if it was something purchased for the recipient. Those purchased for the recipient were market gifts presented on gifting occasions. The remaining categories encompass the majority of the gifts, being items previously owned by the giver.

**Table 5.2: Categories of gift found in treasured garments.**

Market Gift	Unexpected	Requested	Taken	Forced	Hand Me Down
Bart's Scarf	Tom's T-Shirt*	Phoebe's Skirt*	Ali's Vest*	George's Shirt	George's Jacket*
Morgan's Scarf*		Abbie's T-Shirt*			
Zoe's Bag*					

'Most treasured' garments denoted by\*.

### 5.3.1 Market Gifts

The first item Bart spoke about was a scarf given to him by his father, since deceased, that Bart had never worn:

My Dad wasn't like a close person or anything and he just give me this scarf and it was kind of very different, and I'm always going to keep it...and, I don't even know how to wear it [puts it on] it's weird, but um, I'm always going to keep it because it's ah, because it's the last gift. So that's very emotional, you know, connection I've got. (Bart, 2018)

The scarf remains unused, so Bart doesn't have any associations or memories attached to it other than those of the gift. Bart keeps it because it was the last thing his father gave to him before he passed away, endowing it with emotional weight. This instance supports classic gift theory in that the gift retains something of the giver and reminds Bart of his relationship with the giver. It demonstrates that the process of acquisition impacts treasuring, as the gifting is here the key aspect of his relationship with the garment.

After Morgan graduated from university aged 21, she moved from a town in Florida to New York City,

So I was twenty one and had no idea what I was doing with my life and um, I found this woman that I worked with who was amazing, and she was about

20 years older than me and we just kind of clicked and became really good friends (Morgan, 2018).

Morgan looked up to this colleague and her husband and thought they had the kind of life that she would like to lead one day. The woman became a mentor to her during her time in New York and, as Morgan put it, “they sort of adopted me into their family” (Morgan, 2018). Morgan remains close to them to this day and the couple attended her wedding. When Morgan moved from New York to London, these ‘fancy friends’ gave her a going away gift; a pink, cashmere scarf by the luxury brand, Calypso St Barth. Their relationship highlights what is considered ‘family’; Morgan refers to herself as being ‘adopted’ by them and sees them as very close, like family.

Morgan also relates this gift to her actions, believing she must have done something to deserve such a gift: “I’m glad that I did the thing I did to make them give me this as a gift and it reminds me of the people that gave it to me” (Morgan, 2018). Even though it was a gift from friends, there was no expectation of reciprocity, perhaps because they were so close, ‘like family’. The gift does not appear self-interested on the part of the givers, although Morgan does feel indebted to them for the kindness they showed her. The gift may have assisted in maintaining their bond at a time of transition and separation.

Zoe’s treasured garment was a gift from her father, but the story of its acquisition of her garment is more complex. Zoe describes her desire for the bag the moment she laid eyes on it, “my Dad bought one identical for my Mum, [...] for Christmas [...] eight or nine years ago, [...] she unwrapped it and I literally looked at it and I was I like I love that bag!” (Zoe, 2018). For Zoe, it was love at first sight but the bag belonged to her mother. So Zoe’s relationship with her treasured object began before she owned it. Zoe spoke about times when the family were going somewhere special and she would ask if she could use her mum’s bag: “I loved that it was my Mum’s and that I borrowed it from my Mum and [...] me and my Mum have got completely different [...] styles, [...] it was quite nice that I could [...] borrow something from her, [...] we just like shared this love for this bag” (Zoe, 2018).

Sharing this item seemed to strengthen the bond between Zoe and her mother, something they mutually enjoyed.

However, the shared love for the bag also caused some friction; “Every time we would go somewhere like special, or like go out for dinner or anything like that I’d always be like [...] can I please borrow your bag? And she’d be like ‘Well I wanna wear it’ and I’d be like ‘Well I wanna wear it’” (Zoe, 2018). Zoe described her delight when she received her own version of the bag for Christmas a year later, “I opened it up and I was like oh my god it’s like, I can’t believe you’ve got me one!” (Zoe, 2018). To Zoe, the bag was so unique she was surprised that her dad could just go back to the antiques shop where her mother’s bag was purchased and buy another one. When reflecting during the interview, she wondered why she did not just go and buy herself the same bag, concluding that it was because: “I just always thought it was so special so I never thought ah, I’ll just go buy myself one” (Zoe, 2018).

Through the gift of the bag, Zoe is connected to both her parents, and it acts a reminder of that connection now Zoe no longer lives with them. “I’m reminded of my Mum and Dad...almost, because I don’t see them very much anymore [...] that’s [the bag] something we shared together, and my Dad was so chuffed that, like, me and my Mum had matching ones” (Zoe, 2018). The bag is clearly a source of happiness for both the recipients and the giver, and it has become a symbol of their familial relationship.

Peter Corrigan (2008) found that it was ‘extremely rare’ for fathers to buy daughters market gifts. Here, there is the extenuating circumstance that the gift was originally from husband to wife on a gifting occasion (Christmas) which is in line with his findings. However, the fact that there was borrowing of her mother’s bag, before Zoe owned her own version, blurs the boundary between market gift and requested gift. The gift takes on additional meaning celebrating the act of both sharing and free giving within the family.



### 5.3.2 Unexpected Gifts

In 1996, a work colleague gave Tom his T-shirt after Tom mentioned that he liked it. Tom linked the treasuring of his garment to the story of its acquisition, recounting the narrative of how he was given the T-Shirt. The gift was not depicted as a special moment; he makes it seem everyday, an ordinary conversation that might happen at work:

Ok, so, it was given to me by a guy called John, and, er, John was a er, was the manager of a erm, a respite home for disabled people. And this was John's T-shirt, he used to wear this and I commented once that I really liked his T-shirt and he said 'Do you like it?' and I said 'Yeah, I really like it' and he said "You can have it" and I said "Are you sure?" and he said "Yeah, of course", and he gave me his T-shirt. (Tom, 2018)

John displayed a kindness that Tom was not expecting.

[T]he idea of people gifting through altruism or just a gift that there was no expectation of reciprocity was quite alien to me, so this was really quite...so this felt kind of quite bizarre at the time, that someone's just going to give me their T-shirt. (Tom, 2018)

Receiving a gift without the expectation of reciprocity, not within a family context, is considered by anthropologists highly unusual (Malinowski, 1922: 177, cited in Corrigan, 2008). In accordance with Belk (2010: 717), Tom's gift can be seen as a perfect gift, that is, a gift which is "immaterial (the thought counts more than the material manifestation), priceless (removed from the monetary considerations of commodity exchange), and imposes no obligation of a return gift". In addition, as the gift was from an acquaintance rather than close kin, there was no previous relationship of gifting and sharing between them. Belk (1996) had earlier identified six characteristics of the perfect gift:

1. The giver makes an extraordinary sacrifice
2. The giver wishes solely to please the recipient
3. The gift is a luxury
4. The gift is something uniquely appropriate to the recipient
5. The recipient is surprised by the gift
6. The recipient desires the gift and is delighted by it (Belk, 2010: 718).

While here, the extent to which the giver made an extraordinary sacrifice or the gift being a luxury depends on interpretation, the other characteristics hold true.

Looking at the context of Tom's life at the time, he was working a low paid job and had little money, so a T-Shirt could be seen as a luxury. A common metaphor to describe sacrifice for another person is 'give the shirt off my own back' which is what literally happened here. In this way Tom's gift can be seen to fulfil the criteria of the perfect gift, and this contributes to his reasons for treasuring the garment.

This example stands in contrast to the dominant view of gift exchange as rational, self-serving or connected to the family. In this example, a gift was motivated by caring and altruism, normally associated with sharing rather than gifting.<sup>3</sup> This instance suggests that caring motivations can and do exist in gift exchange even if they are rare. Tom kept coming back to the word 'altruism' in his interview, both in relation to what he felt the gift of the T-shirt represented and the work he was involved in at the time. There also something about the notion of 'giving back' to society in the ethos of Tom's profession; you are giving the gift of your time and energy to help others. Belk (2010) highlights the behaviour of employees who work in paid caregiving:

They go above and beyond the call of duty, sometimes spending their own meager wages to help care for those in their charge. Their rewards for such true care are intrinsic more than extrinsic (Belk, 2010: 720).

It seems that the behaviour of caregivers to their clients can spill over into their relationships to each other. It was the feeling of both helping others and being helped by others that Tom remembered most clearly in his interview. The T-shirt embodies Tom's ideal of his profession, and this contributes to its treasured status.

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<sup>3</sup> For Belk, one of the elements that sets 'sharing' apart from gift exchange and commodity exchange is that "sharing is likely to involve caring and love" (2010: 720).

### 5.3.3 Requested Gifts



Figure 5.1: Abbie's mother wearing the T-shirt in New York

This sub-section deals with gifts initiated by the receiver. Although Abbie's T shirt is considered here as a gift, Abbie requested the no longer worn T-shirt from her mother and her mother happily acceded. It is a 1990s oversized T-shirt with a bright graphic print. The style is fashionable in 2019, and people often ask her if she got it from a vintage shop. Abbie recalls: "I remembered that my Mum had this T-shirt and that she wore it like, when I was a kid and I was like 'Ah, do you still have it?' and then she did have it" (Abbie, 2018). The story of the T-shirt is that it had already been gifted before from Abbie's grandmother to her mother. This intergenerational history lends depth to the meaning of the garment, and a greater obligation for it to remain inalienable.

Phoebe recalled the pleasure of finding her treasured skirt, "I think the whole act of discovering it was very nice [...] as soon as I found it, I was like 'Oh wow, I've like, hit the jackpot, I love this'" (Phoebe, 2018). There was a trunk in the attic full of clothes,

previously belonging to her mother, which Phoebe had used for dressing up as child. Phoebe found the skirt, which she hadn't seen before, in the trunk reasoning: "So they were clearly her like, favourite things that she couldn't bring herself to get rid of, but then she knew she'd never wear" (Phoebe, 2018). Phoebe didn't remember her mother wearing the skirt, or any of the other clothes in the trunk.

Phoebe is close to her mother, describing herself as a 'Mummy's girl'. Phoebe recalled her mother's reaction when she asked if she could have the skirt: "I think, she was just like 'Oh yes of course you can have it darling, you'll look great in it' [laughs] [...] I think I was like 'Oh, do you mind if I borrow it?' [...] Long term borrow [...] but she's very supportive like that." (Phoebe, 2018). By the term borrow, Phoebe makes it clear she still sees the skirt as belonging to her mother. The ownership of the skirt blurs over into sharing. Sharing clothes between mother and daughter and between sisters seems to be common in Phoebe's family. She described occasions when she or her sisters had borrowed some of her mother's old clothing for fancy dress parties, and said that because she was the youngest, a lot of her clothes were hand me downs. Because of this, Phoebe makes strong associations between people and garments:

I think I associate a lot of memory and er...a lot of the clothes that I have, have been someone's given me them or I've inherited them from one of my sisters or my Mum or family members...erm, maybe they all see that I don't buy any clothes for myself [laughs] (Phoebe, 2018).

She has a sense of pride in the connections of the skirt "Whenever I've worn it people have been like 'Wow...where have you...where did you get that from?' and I'm like "Oh hooo, in a trunk, in the attic!" (Phoebe, 2018). People often comment or compliment her on it, which allows Phoebe to recount the narrative of how it was discovered.

#### 5.3.4 Taken Gifts

Ali's vest originally belonged to his father. He took the vest back with him after a visit home and has had it ever since. Ali wears the vest for parties and nights out, but only 'when the occasion is right'. He had always known the shirt existed and had strong childhood memories of his parents and siblings wearing a variety of similarly designed garments. When asked if he was given the garment, Ali replied "I don't know about 'given', [...] It was knocking around and I took it" (Ali, 2018). The strong connection he felt with the garment overrode his sense of needing to ask for it. It is not known if his family knows that he has it. The owner of the vest is blurred in this case, however, Ali clearly felt a sense of entitlement to the garment built upon his childhood connections.

#### 5.3.5 Forced

The previous examples have described gifts that the recipients were happy to receive. For George, the gift of a shirt from his father was unwanted. George is a creative dresser with a clear idea of his personal style who enjoys dressing up. George described the shirt as 'forced on me by my father':

This is so messed up, my, I went to visit my Dad once, and he doesn't really like the way I dress, he's very conservative, so, erm, he lent me a shirt to wear to dinner with some of his friends and I kept it, and then, I didn't have anything to go painting in and I just kind of grabbed it, I didn't really think about it [...]. (George, 2018)

His dad's gift can be seen as an attempt to control how George looked, wanting to make him 'respectable' in front of his friends. George highlighted that his parents had a very different view of 'what clothes were for', "they're like, you wear clothes to look appropriate, to go to work in. And I'm like, that's definitely not why I wear clothes! [laughs]" (George, 2018). In one sense, George is using this shirt to look appropriate for work, but in his line of work wearing clothes that you can splash paint on is the norm. The dress shirt that represented the type of office job that his parents might wish he had, has been reconfigured as workwear for the type of job

he actually has as a freelance designer. Even the forced gift appears to carry strong associations with the giver, and allows meanings to co-exist. The shirt is able to embody the tension between George's attitude to dress and his father's. Furthermore, George has adapted the shirt to his personal needs. This dual association, between his family and his work life, has contributed to the shirt's treasured status. The shirt tells the story not only of his sometimes-difficult relationship with his father but also of his professional success and creativity. It is both the relation to the giver, and George's subsequent transformation of the shirt that contribute to its treasured status.

### **5.3.6 Hand Me Down**

A friend of the family who worked in fashion and television gave George his most treasured garment, a Helmut Lang sand-blasted denim jacket. This family friend often gave George clothing that he no longer wanted, so this could be read as a quasi-family 'hand me down' gifting relationship. George appreciates gifts and described why it was so significant to him "having been given a garment [...] it's so special because you're like wow, someone parted with this and now I'm like, I would never part with this" (George, 2018). George draws attention to how the gift of clothing should show an understanding of the receiver and who they are.

I think being gifted clothes [...], I get given lots of stuff for like, birthdays and Christmas and stuff because people know [...] that brings me joy and I think it's a very special thing to understand someone well enough to be able to give them appropriate clothing [...] that they're gonna love and wear and I think that was, it was sort of fortuitous because at the time that I got given it I didn't like it and I didn't want to wear it and then I grew into it [...] and I think the person who gave that to me knew that, in a way. (George, 2018)

There is no evident expectation of reciprocity in this gifting relationship that could be ascertained from the interview. The gifts of clothing were one-way—a kind, caring act by a family friend. The ability to give a successful clothing gift is, for George, confirmation of a beneficial relationship. He attributes an almost magical power to the giver of his jacket to know what George would need in the future. He

sees this gift in particular as one that had thought behind it, and was not just a way to dispose of unwanted clothing. Stronger than its association with the giver, the jacket appears to embody this more general sense of others understanding George's identity.

### **5.3.7 Discussion of Gift Exchange**

Corrigan (2008) examined the circulation and exchange of clothing within families, based on a study of three working class families in Dublin, 1983-1985, and is one of few pieces of research to focus on clothing movement within Western families. He found that "between a quarter and a third of all items present [in the wardrobe] had not been self purchased on the market by their owners, but obtained from other sources. These sources turned out to be overwhelmingly from family members" (110). That flow of clothing between family members can be seen in this research as well. Corrigan's (2008) 'cast off' suggests items that the owner no longer wants, and that giving is a mode of divestment decided by the owner. However, we have seen that Phoebe and Ali initiated the handing down of clothing; the recipient took the active role. In George's case, the shirt was not cast off because no longer wanted, but for the instrumental purpose of attempting to control George's appearance. And in Ali's case, the term stealing seems too pejorative to represent the way he saw the vest as belonging to him because of his long-standing and powerful sense of connection to it. These cases extend Corrigan's categories of circulation.

These cases are also relevant when considering McCracken's (1986) opinion of gifts of clothing where the gifting of particular garments and kinds of garments can represent the passing on of particular concepts and attitudes of gender. As McCracken suggests in relation to female clothing: a "dress contains [a particular] concept and the giver invites the recipient to define herself in its terms" (1986: 78). In the cases in which the participants (male or female) requested their garments from their parents, they are defining themselves in their own terms rather than the givers. George rejected the concept of himself embodied by the shirt by changing its use and appearance.

The 'gift' of George's shirt from his father can be read as a power struggle over how George presents himself. Corrigan (2008) recognized that power struggles are inherent in gift relationships although anthropologists usually exclude familial gift giving from this power struggle. His father gave him the shirt not to be kind, but as a way of controlling George's image. George reluctantly agreed to present himself as his father wished at the dinner with his father's friends, but was upset by the gift of the shirt. His subsequent use of the shirt can be seen as a strategy to take back control over how he presents himself to the world. George has been able to physically transform the shirt into something he wants to wear while maintaining a connection to his father in its full nuance and contradiction, in this way, the shirt embodies the story of George's difficult relationship with his father.

More recently Kirsi Laitala and Ingun Grimstad Klepp (2017) have written on clothing exchange within families, basing their results on three studies carried out in Norway that looked at children's and adult's inheritance of clothing (Laitala & Klepp, 2007; 2012; 2014). Their definition of 'inheritance' as "passing on pre-owned items to new users in general, not only after the death of the previous owner" is usefully applied to the findings of this study (Laitala & Klepp, 2017: 68). Laitala and Klepp (2018) grouped "borrow, steal or inherit" under private circulation of clothing, distinguished from Corrigan's cast offs because inheritance emphasises that the items are precious rather than disposable. In this study, clothes acquired from their parents as gifts, might for this reason be described as inherited. Here, children have been the active party in gifting relationships between parents and children through finding, requesting, borrowing or taking. Even George was active in the reconstructing the meaning of his unwanted gift to make it his own. Whilst in Laitala and Klepp's research the children still lived with their parents or were aged under eighteen, in the current study the 'children' were adults living away from home. This might explain the difference in the symmetry of clothing circulation found. Hence, this study extends the findings of Laitala and Klepp with different modes of clothing inheritance.



It was also observed that clarity of ownership is not necessary for treasuring. Ali saw his vest as both belonging to him but not belonging to him. He described the garment as “not really mine” and “a family heirloom” (Ali, 2018). Ultimately, he sees himself more as the custodian of a family treasure that he plans to pass on. In Phoebe’s family, open sharing and borrowing was the norm.<sup>4</sup> Phoebe described her skirt as ‘long term borrowed’ from her mother. ‘Long term borrowed’ could be a euphemism, as Phoebe knew this dress was one of her mother’s favourites, and she might not have wanted to deprive her mother of it completely. In both of these examples there are elements of shared ownership, the participants see themselves as a custodian of their garment rather than an owner.

The sharing and inheriting of clothing between adult children and parents has been written about in the popular press (Tierney, 2014; Walker, 2018; Smith, 2019), usually confined to mother-daughter relationships. These articles highlighted the tension present in wearing the clothing of parents. Although the mothers in the article were happy to let their daughters wear their clothes, there was concern about how the clothing would be cared for (see Tierney, 2014). In this research, many of those interviewed had vivid memories of their parents wearing the items they now wear. The treasuring of these items as significant items in the wardrobe may be a strategy by the children to allay fears from the parent that the clothing will not be sufficiently cared for or appreciated.

The ability of gifts to embody the relationship between giver and receiver, and to strengthen those ties was found here in accord with the anthropological literature. Corrigan (2008) found that the purchase of clothing by a father to give to a son was rare. In this research, three of the male participants selected garments given by their father as among their treasured garments. Perhaps the unusual nature of clothes circulation between fathers and sons contributed to these garments’ treasured status.

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<sup>4</sup> For Belk (2010), borrowing is distinct from sharing.

The gifts that were treasured were marked out by a physical or temporal separation with the giver, be that through leaving home, moving countries or departure through death. It could be that the distance between giver and receiver contributes to whether the gift is thought of as treasured. Many of the gifts discussed here were seen as altruistic, motivated by care and love and without an expectation of reciprocity. In cases where a connection to the giver was not maintained, it was the act of giving, and the kindness shown, that contributed to the garments' treasured status.

## **5.4 Commodity**

One of the key characteristics of commodities in Western societies is that a commodity is usually self-purchased with money. Therefore, the first part of this section will discuss how money and price impacts treasured garments.

### **5.4.1 Economic Value and 'Getting a Bargain'**

Whilst the economic value or re-sale value of the participants' treasured garments was not a factor in their treasuring process because they had become inalienable, the original price of purchased garments had significant impact. For many of the participants, the reduced price of the garment was one of the reasons they were able to acquire it. All the participants who purchased their items reported feeling they had got 'a bargain' and were pleased that they had paid comparatively little for something they felt was more economically valuable.

Ali emphasized what he called his 'thriftiness' throughout the interview; he carefully pointed out that he only went shopping when he needed a new item of clothing, giving the example of ripping his shorts, or when things wore out. He said he shopped rarely, and when he did he always tried to find what he needed second hand first. However, with formalwear, which he required for work and events, he conceded that it was difficult to purchase second hand and that cheap suits could be unflattering. He was proud that he had purchased his suit in a sale, claiming it was

around £200 in contrast to the original price of £400. The suit not only highlighted his shopping skills, but reflected his valuing of thrift.

Rhuza also does a lot of her clothes shopping in charity shops and was proud of her bargains, “I found this shirt in a charity shop... It was like £2.50 for this incredible, wonderful silk shirt; [...] I also love these trousers [gestures to the bright purple trousers she is wearing] they are Levis vintage trousers, I found them in a charity shop again they were like £5” (Rhuza, 2018). Rhuza emphasizes the charity shop purchase, followed by the price. Again, price indicates she paid less than the economic value.

Phoebe’s dress was only £5, purchased from a local charity; the brand, Toast, is one that Phoebe likes, but she found their full-price items too expensive, so she sometimes purchased new items on sale. The significance of the economic value is not only the pleasure of a bargain, but that participants simply could not afford to pay full price. All had budgets for clothing and price ceilings they said they would not go above for any single item.

Alexandra Palmer (2005) noted this desire for a bargain and its relation to the growth in second hand buying:

Another discount fashion junkie remarked: ‘Who wants to pay full price for anything? I don’t. You’re definitely beating the system’ (Sullivan, 2000: 301). Vintage shopping can be viewed as a continuation of discount culture, while simultaneously achieving an individual identity and exclusivity that brand names have lost (Palmer, 2005: 199).

In this study as well, second hand and discount shopping in general was rewarded by a sense of beating the system, whether that be the fashion system, or the capitalist system. In summary, the price of the treasured garment at the point of acquisition determined if they were able to acquire it and how they viewed it.

### 5.4.2 New and Second hand

Gregson and Crewe (2003: 2) point out, “Goods have both a use and exchange value that extends well beyond the first cycle”. Just as exchange can be divided into gift and commodity, it can also be divided by acquisition: new or second hand. Second hand goods are understood to have a different commodity character to new ones. Belk explains,

buying used goods necessarily involves buying singularized potentially inalienable possessions that may be perceived as contaminated by their prior owners [...] therefore second hand goods, especially those of a ‘personal’ nature like used clothing, underwear or shoes, are not perfect commodities. (2010: 719)

When purchasing second hand, there is an added element of uniqueness where only one version of the product is available; taking it a step toward singularisation from the perfect commodity. Vintage and second hand clothing stores can be seen to operate in a similar way to the ceremony in gift giving by obscuring the item’s commodity character.

The key reasons found in the literature for acquiring second hand clothing are: better quality at lower price, the shopping experience of treasure hunting, uniqueness and originality, environmental values and anti-consumption attitudes (Palmer and Clarke, 2005; Roux, 2006; Xu et al., 2014; Laitala and Klepp, 2018). Palmer notes that vintage shopping and clothing is “promoted as a sign of individuality and connoisseurship” (2005: 197).

This range of reasons was confirmed in this study. Beyond price as a motivating factor for participants who purchased second hand, the shopping experience was noted. Phoebe, Rhuza, George, Mark and Bart said they enjoyed browsing vintage and charity shops. Phoebe, Rhuza and George were also motivated by environmental and ethical concerns around fast fashion, and claimed they could find more interesting pieces in charity shops. Phoebe, Rhuza and George regularly shopped in second hand stores, whereas Mark and Bart did not. Participants emphasized

‘getting a bargain’ and the style of the items. They were either a way to get a brand they liked for a better price (Mark’s coat and Phoebe’s dress) or seen as unique, beautiful garments (Bart’s shirt, George’s skirt, Rhuza’s shirt).

As Laitala and Klepp (2018) point out, much research on purchasing second hand clothing has focused on vintage and personal style. Other forms of second hand clothing acquisition such as acquiring second hand items as gifts, hand me downs, trading with a friend or at a swapping party are rarely considered; this is what they term ‘informal exchange’. They found a difference in motivation between the formal and informal channels: “Both environment and economic reasons are important for those who take part in informal clothing circulation. Uniqueness and style are more important for those who buy second hand clothing” (Laitala and Klepp, 2018: 258). In this study, it is true that uniqueness and style were important for those who purchased second hand clothing, however so were environment and economic reasons. In regard to informal second hand items, uniqueness and style were found to be motivating factors, as well as the connection to the original owner and giver.<sup>5</sup>

Table 5.4 below clarifies the distribution of gifts and purchases of new and second hand items identified as treasured in the study. This clearly shows that many of the items received as gifts were also second hand items. In nearly all cases, second hand gifts previously belonged to the giver; the exception was Zoe’s handbag purchased from an antiques shop by the giver.

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<sup>5</sup> Laitala and Klepp focused more on the disposal of clothing and giving those unwanted clothes to others, and focused their attention on families with children under 18, where hand-me-downs were found to be more common. In this study, the focus is on adults who no longer live in the family home.

**Table 5.3: Distribution of treasured garments by acquisition mode**



Note: 'Most treasured' garments are in shown in red.

Laitala and Klepp noted that 'contamination' of used garments can be seen as positive or negative, whether these are physical contaminants like stains, or mental associations or beliefs (2018: 250-51). Here, treasured garments given second hand from family members were positively contaminated. Even for second hand clothes that were purchased, there was an expressed desire to know their history prior to acquisition (see for example Abbie's story) which implies a positive attitude to the 'contamination' of others.

For Rhuza, the treasured items that she had purchased new were in aid of friends and family or to support her ethical beliefs about fashion. A charity T-shirt designed by her partner's niece and a pair of leggings designed by her friend were purchased to support the designers in their endeavours and now remind her of those people. While these purchases would be seen as commodity exchange in a strict view of the

money transaction, they have some of the characteristics of gift exchange. There is an existing relationship between the buyer and seller and the item becomes a representation of that relationship. Such exchanges take on something of Corrigan's category of 'family made commodity', extending 'family' to include a wider circle of loving relationships. While Belk stated that "business exchanges embedded in personal friendships [...] lose some of their impersonal commodity character" (2010: 720), here the exchange could be read as a double gift, in which the designer gives their work to the receiver, and the receiver gives money by way of appreciation of their work, in this way the parties are giving each other a gift.

One could also extend Laitala and Klepp's (2017) concept of informal markets, originally developed in relation to the flow of used clothing, to be applied to new clothing in Rhuza's case. Table 5.5 below shows how the acquisition of the participants' most treasured garments is distributed according to informal and formal markets rather than gift and commodity. Here, Rhuza's items are shifted to the 'informal exchange' side.

**Table 5.4: Distribution of treasured garments by exchange mode.**



Note: 'Most treasured' garments are shown in red.

The intersections between new and second hand, and formal and informal exchange have been explored. The identity and relation of the previous owner/ seller to the participant is relevant to subsequent treasuring in both new and second hand items. For example, the items acquired through informal exchange were strongly associated with the giver. Those garments that were second hand and had previously belonged to the giver were more strongly associated with them through positive contamination. Items that were self-purchased were more related to sense of self and personal style, and included brands and design elements the participants felt drawn to.

#### **5.4.3 Desire and Fate in Purchased Garments**

Both Bart's leather jacket and Ali's suit were purchased new after a concerted search for the right item. Classic menswear items are often the subject of such searches, and there is plenty of advice available on finding the perfect suit (Boyle, 2015), or what to look for in a leather jacket (Van den Broeke, 2019) indicating that these are common desires. Bart described the time and expense invested to find the right leather jacket:

I always really wanted to have a nice, cool leather jacket and I spent like a couple of thousand pounds buying different ones. (Bart, 2018)

Similarly, Ali described his issues with finding a well-fitting suit:

I'm quite a weird size for smart clothes [...] I've got quite chunky thighs, I think maybe that has something to do with cycling so suit trousers are like, an interminable, like, frustration for me. Never ending. (Ali, 2018)

Ali and Bart each spent a lot of time and energy searching for their items. Bart had other leather jackets but these were inadequate in some way, and Ali struggled to find a ready-made suit that satisfied his special fit requirements. The lengthy pursuit of their garments made them aware of the difficulty of finding an equivalent.

Christopher B. Steiner wrote "the more difficult the search the more authentic the find" (1995: 152, in Palmer, 2005: 211). When they did find the right version of these



garments in a style they liked, they instantly held them in higher regard than other items in their wardrobe. It is as if the difficulty of the chase added to the value put on them.

There were references to fate in discussions about the acquisition of treasured garments. Many of the interviews expressed a sense that the participants were 'meant to own' the garments they did. Mark spoke about this in relation to the acquisition of his coat:

Someone said 'Oh you should get a Woolrich and then a day later I saw a Woolrich,[...] It just felt like, stupid to talk about like 'fate' with an item of clothing [...]But it felt like a bit like...that,[...]It was significant [...] someone had said that to me, because then I would notice it and get it and it would make me really happy. (Mark, 2018)

This element of fate ties into the feelings of luck upon getting a bargain. Many of the participants felt lucky to own their items and recalled the surprise and delight they felt when they first acquired them.

The desire for Mark and George came when they first saw the item. Mark was visiting a particular shop to look for a fancy dress costume for his work Christmas party, so he wasn't actively looking for a coat at the time. Upon seeing it, he "just stood there for about five minutes going I have to have this coat in my life" (Mark, 2018). There is a sense of deep desire here, the 'have to have it' sense about fashion that cannot always be verbalized. George described something similar when talking about his Indian skirt, "I remember seeing it and just thinking of it as a, as a work of art, I was like, that is a beautiful thing and I, you know, all the avarice in the world, I was like I want it" (George, 2018). This is similar to Zoe's reaction when she first saw the bag her father had given to her mother and she recalled how much she wanted the bag. This feeling of discovery is enhanced when it occurs in a second hand shop, where each item is seemingly unique. The almost accidental nature of the discovery, the sense that was fated to happen, could play a role in thinking about garments as treasured.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the acquisition of treasured garments and the impact of the way in which they were acquired. The multiple ways of acquisition were outlined and placed in context by the literature on exchange. It was noted that many of the most treasured garments were acquired as gifts. Acquisition by gift was consistent with anthropological theories in that gifted garments were strongly associated with the giver and represented the relationship between giver and receiver. This is also consistent with Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) findings that the possessions that people designate as "special" often relate to other people, for example they were gifts or photographs.

However, it was found that the giver-receiver relationship was blurred, and movement of clothing in the family was more fluid. This was highlighted by the categories of 'taken' and 'requested', as well as indefinite sharing or 'permanent borrowing'. The younger generation were active in determining their own inheritance through such methods. Clothes worn by previous generations accrue further meanings and memories from their new wearer, while preserving a feeling of family closeness even when living further away or when parents have passed on.

The findings were discussed in relation to Corrigan (2008) and Laitila and Klepp's (2017; 2018) work on clothing movement within families, which highlighted sub-categories of gifting, such as borrowing, stealing, cast offs and fluid sharing. The findings of this study add further nuance to this literature by examining children who have left home, and in-between categories of 'taken', 'hand me down' and 'forced'.

Gifts in this study did not generally entail the expectation of reciprocity. Where present, it was a 'generalized reciprocity' where both parties behaved in the open and giving way common in close kin relations (Sahlins, 1972). This applied even to some extra-family gifts, such as George's hand me downs from a family friend. In Tom's case, a gift from a colleague had the appearance of a 'perfect' gift, with no continuing relationship between giver and receiver. This unusual nature made such

gifts special, contributing to their status as treasured, where the gift became endowed with values of respect for identity for George, and altruism for Tom. These cases requires a widening of what can be considered reciprocal behaviour, Laitala and Klepp suggest, for example, that “the donator gets a cleaner conscience in return [...] for the garment” by avoiding waste or other instrumental reasons (2017: 73). However, in the case of Tom’s T-shirt and George’s jacket, the motivation for the gifts appears to be to help the receiver, an altruistic, caring motivation which runs counter to the dominant theory that suggests gift exchange is motivated by self interest.

Rhuza’s charity T-shirt and cycling leggings were cited as examples as commodity exchange working more like gift exchange. Rhuza purchased the items from friends and family, and the garments represent her relationship with them and retain something of the maker. The gift-commodity differentiation was questioned in favour of Laitala and Klepp’s formal and informal exchange. It was suggested it might be more useful to view acquisition of treasured garments in these terms, as what was often important to the owners was the relationship that the garment represented.

The distance from the commodity status of an object, its degree of singularization on acquisition, seemed to impact the process of treasuring. In giving an item as a gift, its origin and status as a commodity is obscured by the giver (Carrier, 2013). Purchasing an item second hand has a similar distancing effect. Following Kopytoff (1986), the more something is singularized, the less it is seen in commodity terms. Therefore, at the point of acquisition many treasured garments had already moved away from ‘pure commodity’ by being a gift, second hand or made by a friend.

Garments purchased by the participants related more to development of personal identity, whereas items received as a gift reflected shared identities. The relation between treasured garments and identity is discussed in Chapter 8. In the stories of the acquisition of treasured garments, there is often a sense of longing or desire for that item and a feeling of fulfillment when ownership is achieved. Sometimes an element of fate that surrounds the acquisition of the garments, that they were

meant to be. George attributes almost magical powers to the giver; it was 'as if they knew' how the recipient's life would change and that their gift would be useful for their future self.

The treasured garments were by and large acquired in interesting or notable ways, ways that were outside the ordinary experience of going to a shop and buying an item of clothing. There was a sense of discovery, whether in long-sought items purchased new, or garments found in the family wardrobe. The narrative of the acquisition of the object was important to its meaning in both gift and purchasing scenarios. There is also the element of the unexpected in the stories of acquisition; the owners were often surprised to gain ownership of the garment. The unusual circumstances of the acquisition contributed to the participants seeing their garments as special from the beginning.

## 6. Materiality

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the ways in which the material nature of the treasured garments was central to the meanings the participants ascribed to them. This study expected to encounter kept but no longer worn clothing and the reasons individuals had for keeping their treasured objects. However, as the majority of the participants actively wore their most treasured garments, the research broadened into practices of both wearing and keeping. This chapter describes and analyses the material practices associated with individuals and their treasured garments. It begins by considering the sensual interactions of person and garment. It then moves on to examine the practices of alteration, care and repair, how participants live with and attempt to preserve their garments. Finally, there is a consideration of how the treasured garments are stored.

The participants spoke about the physical garment, its fabric, the experience of wearing, the beauty of the garment and how it made them feel. The material qualities of their garments, the physicality of them as objects, were implicated in garments becoming considered as treasured. It is not that meanings are layered onto inert objects; the objects, by way of their material nature, have agency in how they are defined, used and why they become treasured. The properties of the garment helped to dictate the possible meanings, associations and the treasuring practices engendered. How the garment looks, feels, smells, moves were factors that individuals repeatedly considered. Indeed, in the interviews, a number of the participants put the garments on as they discussed them: Mark did the entire interview wearing his coat; George and Bart put on each item as they spoke about it; and others held, opened and offered me their garments to touch and examine.

## 6.2 Materiality and Clothing

The *Handbook of Material Culture* (2006) acknowledged that the concept of materiality is subject to scholarly debate. However it asserts that the term is usually used to refer to “the fleshy, corporeal and physical, as opposed to spiritual, ideal and value laden aspects of human existence” (Tilley et al., 2006: 3). Daniel Miller’s (2005) conception of materiality desires to go beyond a ‘vulgar’ account of the artefact, to “the ephemeral, the imaginary, the biological and the theoretical; all that which would have been external to the simple definition of an artefact” (Miller, 2005: 4). This would seem to be at odds with other definitions, which ground materiality in the physical. Tim Ingold (2007) argued that discussion of an object’s materiality is often distracted by theory, and called for a focus on the materials that objects are made from. Woodward and Fisher (2014: 12) proposed using concepts from both Miller and Ingold, and argued that the two were not as opposed as they seemed. Their position allows the analysis of the materials, the individual’s relationship to the material object and the meanings that may arise from this relationship. This position is adopted here.

Woodward and Fisher argued that it was difficult to apply a semiotic approach to items of clothing because “such approaches seem to deny the very material stuff of fashion” (2014: 5). Cwerner warns, “Clothes are not simply abstract elements of a system of meanings and communication. They are primarily material objects that possess material lives or biographies” (2001: 88). Campbell further points out that meaning is not “dependent on their use being witnessed by others and hence associated with public display” and can therefore be held privately (1996: 103). He goes on to argue that considerations about clothing such as fit, comfort in wear, ease of cleaning, or tendency to crease are often discounted in relation to more prominent symbolic meanings relating to colours and styles (Campbell, 1996: 100). Appadurai (2003: 15) highlights that it is the materialness of clothing that leaves the possibility for new meanings to be created. It is therefore important that material nature of clothing is recognized in analysis of its potential meanings.

Clothing as material object is seen as an active element in the creation of meaning rather than a mere carrier of symbols or representations inscribed upon it (Latour, 1995; Keane, 2005). In other words, it is seen as having agency (Miller, 1987; Keane 2005); an agency emerging through “material/human assemblages” (Woodward & Fisher, 2014: 8). Dant (2005: 60) explains this saying, “the agency of the objects is essentially human agency transferred to material objects”. It is the interaction between the person and garment that reveals their agency. Dant explains:

What we do in the material world is shaped in two ways, first, by the direct impact of objects on our perceptions channelled via the bodily sensations of sight, touch, smell, taste and sound; and second, the meanings and significance of these bodily sensations are shaped through the embodied processes of mind and memory by our cultural experience (Dant, 2005: x-xi).

Klepp and Bjerck point out that much of the difficulty “in studies of materiality is to grasp the non-verbalized experiences and to translate the non-verbalized experiences of clothes in use into written academic language” (2014: 374). These material experiences play a role in individuals’ wearing, keeping and treasuring of garments and the meanings they ascribe to them.

### **6.3 Garments and the Senses**

This section examines the participants’ accounts of wearing their garments, in many of them, the sensory feeling evoked by the materials of the garment was recalled, not only how the clothes felt to wear, but how the participant felt when they were wearing them. The section follows the different senses of sight, touch, hearing and smell. Touch encompasses sentiments of wearing because to wear a garment is both to touch and to be touched by it (Turney, 2012: 308). This dual meaning is also inscribed in the word ‘feel’; one can both feel a fabric by touching it and have emotional feelings about it. In the position of researcher, I was handed the garments to examine; I too could feel the fabric, examine the stitching and in one case, even try on the item. This engagement with the material of the garments was important to understanding the participants’ experiences.

When Rhuza described her treasured garment it was the physical, material properties that she emphasized: “It’s pure silk, it’s such a pleasant garment to wear, I love it to bits, and it has [an] incredible pattern of this kind of animals [...] the sleeve is amazing” (Rhuza, 2018).



Figure 6.1: The pattern on Rhuza’s Shirt

Rhuza mentions several elements of the garment: the fibre it is made from, the design on the fabric, the construction of the garment, that it is pleasing to wear, all contributing to her feelings for it. It is the sensual, material stimulation through vision and touch that sets it above other items in her wardrobe. When probed further about what in particular it was about the garment, Rhuza kept going back to the design and construction of the shirt, “It’s, it’s the fabric I think that makes it very special, the pattern. And the cut as well (Rhuza, 2018). She went on to explain that while you could reproduce the same cut, the same pattern would be unobtainable. Summing up, she stressed: “And the creativity behind, that’s what, it is very



important” (Rhuza, 2018). Her love for the shirt expands into an admiration of human creative endeavour, emphasising how all its material elements are perceived together as an entity.

George was initially attracted by how his skirt looked and this is one of the reasons that it became treasured “I remember seeing it and just thinking of it as a, as a work of art, I was like, that is a beautiful thing [...] I mean the colour, the fabric, like everything about it is just, so spectacular” (George, 2018). It was sensual appreciation and engagement that drew him to it. However, George also noted that “I wasn’t as emotionally attached as I am now,” showing that while the beauty of the object plays a strong initial role, over time, ownership and wearing contribute to attachment.

Appreciation for how the garment looks maps on to Bye and McKinney’s (2007) concept of ‘aesthetic value’ as a reason for keeping clothing that no longer fit. But keeping clothing past its useful life is not the same as treasuring, as many of the treasured garments were found to be in active use. In this study, aesthetic value and sentimental value overlap, individuals are drawn to the garment and wear it because they find it beautiful; this initiates additional experiences and meanings that become layered, so that visual beauty is entangled with subsequent meanings.

The material nature of Mark’s coat is one of the reasons that it is treasured. He felt his coat, and its ability to keep him warm, was a reason he had a good experience in Canada: “I wouldn’t have enjoyed it as much if I didn’t have a really good coat” (Mark, 2018). Mark told stories of having to sleep in his coat, and seemed proud to know that it kept you warm in temperatures of -40 degrees Centigrade; he drew attention to the label on the inside that highlighted this. The coat performs its intended function so well that this has become a reason to value it. Mark described his approach to clothing as very ‘functional’, so it is perhaps unsurprising that he should prize his coat’s functionality so highly.

Mark is happy to share the coat with friends to help them keep warm and to show how good it is at performing this role. He insisted that I put it on so he could show me the effect. Mark (2018) compares how the coat feels in wear to being 'hugged': "when we're going out and we're walking or something, people want to wear it for a little while and just [hugs himself] be hugged for a little while". Being 'hugged', a sensation usually associated with human touch suggests another type of warmth, an emotional warmth.

Morgan highlighted both the material and emotional benefits of her scarf in one statement:

it's big enough, it keeps you warm, you can kind of use it as a blanket, it's very cosy, [...] literally it is cosy [...] but it's that sensation of just being like, wrapped in love and like, cared for and that I think is sort of what's encapsulated inside of the ... the magic of these threads [laughs]. (Morgan, 2018)

Morgan uses the word 'cosy' to describe the warmth of her scarf in two senses, the physical and the emotional. The material attributes of the garment have become linked to her emotional response to it. The potential to bring physical warmth brings with it associations of comfort, closeness to others, and emotional well-being.

George (2018) also links the material, sensual qualities of the garment with how he feels when he wears it "The skirt makes me feel incredibly powerful like when I'm walking along and it swishes". Here the emotional feeling of power is linked to the swishing of the skirt; the word 'swishing' evokes both the movement of the skirt on the body, and the sound that is created when the skirt moves.

Phoebe (2018) noted of her treasured garment, which originally belonged to her mother, "when I first had it, it kind of still smelt like her". The scent of clothing is noted as especially evocative of another person, most poignantly after they have passed away (Stallybrass, 1993). In this case Phoebe's mother is still alive, and the skirt no longer smells of her, but Phoebe remembers fondly a time when it did. The

change in scent marks the change in ownership in an instinctual way; the garment is now more Phoebe's than her mother's.

Bart (2018) links the smell of his vintage polyester shirt to its authenticity: "because it's authentic, the polyester smells". In this case the smell is not connected to a person but seen as a property of old polyester. The smell of vintage garments and second hand shops is often commented on by consumers, with the smell of second hand garments sometimes given as a reason not to purchase, a sense that the garment has been too 'contaminated' in Laitala and Klepp's terminology (2018: 250). For Phoebe, this contamination from another was seen positively as a connection to her mother. For Bart, the contamination of scent was also framed positively attesting to the garment's age and status as a 'proper' 70s garment. As Jenss suggests, vintage garments "are precisely valued for their materialization of 'dateness' and their capacity for memory modes through which new wearers can feel in touch with a former fashion time" (2015: 1). Smell is a powerful sense, able to link memory, emotion and time. The research found that the sensual engagement with garments, including smell, was significant in establishing and sustaining attachment in treasured garments.

#### **6.4 Material interaction and Enclothed Cognition**

The materials from which their garments were made, the textiles and their properties (such as warmth, softness, etc.) were often brought up by participants and had an impact on how and why they treasured them. With clothing, textile materials are stated and considered in selling, aftercare and labelling. The textile clothing is made from can inform how the garment is stored and cleaned. The interaction with the material through wearing or touch has usually contributed to the item becoming treasured.

For Ingold, "The properties of materials [...] are not fixed attributes of matter but are processual and relational" (2007:14). This matches the way participants discussed materials in terms of their manifest qualities, such as warmth with Mark's coat or

cosiness with Morgan's scarf. Other participants attributed more abstract properties to the materials of their garments. For example, Bart (2018) remarked "there's just something about leather that makes you feel really comfortable, when it's really cold it just makes you feel, like safe". Security is an immaterial quality that goes beyond technical properties like warmth; the perception of leather as safe is culturally mediated. Morgan (2018) says of her scarf "it's Cashmere and I don't own anything that's Cashmere, so it feels very fancy". Rhuza links the material of silk to a 'pleasant feeling' on her skin. In harmony with Ingold's (2007) view, these properties of the material that the participants discuss are not 'fixed attributes' but have been arrived at through interaction with the garment.

Hebrik, Klepp and Turney (2016) noted different cultural opinions of wool fabrics, finding there were significant differences in how Norwegians and British people perceived the attributes of wool. They found wool was described as 'warm and cosy', 'comfortable', 'practical', 'old fashioned', 'natural', 'homely' and 'itchy'; wool was both a material and a concept, and a narrative was created around the perceived attributes of wool (Hebrik, Klepp & Turney, 2016: 77). These examples emphasise that garment materials have both physical, instrumental meanings such as physical warmth, and conceptual meanings that are dependent on the personal experience of the garment and, possible cultural assumptions about materials.

Material interaction with his treasured garment helps Ali feel prepared for his job as an opera singer; tying his bow tie is part of his pre-show ritual. His treasured garment is stored in the front pocket of a suit carrier that contains his formal 'black-tie' suit. Stored alongside it are the other things he uses to prepare for performances such as sheet music and a metronome.

I feel a sense of when I'm doing it up [mimes tying a bow tie] I'm like 'Ah, there we are, now I'm ready [...] I guess [the] uniform that I get into, that means...gets me into the headspace for doing a certain type of performance. So you're kind of in that uniform, you're in that headspace, it's like, really formal, erm, and I guess it became treasured through being part of my preparation for those events, erm

and therefore part of, um, er, this kind of life long drive I've got to be a singer. (Ali, 2018)

When asked what the difference was between a clip-on and a self-tie bow tie, Ali (2018) referred to a clip on bow tie as “a bit of a cheat,” and “like cutting corners” and used the words ‘real’ and ‘fake’ to differentiate between the two. In this example we can see that the material interaction with the garment has the ability to affect how Ali mentally attunes to a situation. This tie has become an important part of his identity as an opera singer.

Morgan (2018) described forgetting her scarf when travelling and how it changed how she felt on the plane: “I horribly forgot it when we went on this trip last time and I was like oh my god the plane's gonna crash or something because I don't have my thing and like this is awful”. Like Ali and his bow tie, for Morgan, wearing the scarf is part of her preparation ritual and she feels different if she does not have it for travel.

Both Ali's and Morgan's interaction with their garment are examples of of enclothed cognition, in which the socially constructed meaning of a garment affects how the wearer behaves when they are wearing it (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). For Ali, the meanings are a mix of socially constructed ones—that a self-tie bow tie is more professional than a pre-tied one, and personally significant ones—his identity as an opera singer. Furthermore, it is not only the wearing, but the physical practice of putting the bow tie on, that helps him prepare. Morgan's example demonstrates the inverse, how not wearing an item that she usually wore led to her feeling more anxious on a flight. Here, the act of dressing, of tying a tie or wrapping a scarf aids in both the physical and mental preparation for a particular activity, the garments are treasured because of their ability to aid in this preparation.

## **6.5 Altered States: Wear, Care and Repair**

Treasured garments live with and are materially altered by their owners. The majority of the garments examined were not in pristine condition, far from it. They had been worn and marked by use; there were stains, rips, thread pulls, holes, buttons missing, fading, and both deliberate and accidental alterations made to the look of the garments: changes that told the story of their use. George's skirt had a dark tide-mark from being worn in the mud at festivals; his shirt was covered in paint splattered from his decorating work. Rhuza added a ceramic button to replace one that fell off her shirt; Morgan's scarf has a hole where the label once was (Figure 6.3), and the elastic has perished in Phoebe's skirt (Figure 6.8). The garments are materially altered through wear, care and repair. Despite such marks or damage, participants continued to wear their garments. This section discusses the changing state of treasured garments and participants' attempts to care for them.

### **6.5.1 Alterations**

One of the ways some treasured garments had been changed was through deliberate alteration for the purpose of fit. These material alterations, carried out at the time of purchase, contributed to the garment being thought of as treasured.

In this study, men more often than women, discussed the struggle to find clothing that fit. Finding clothes that fit was a common frustration for male participants, with each being able to identify why their bodies did not conform to standard size clothing. For Ali (2018), this only affected formal wear choices: "I'm quite a weird size for smart clothes, casual clothes it seems to be fine". He pointed to a change in men's fashion as the reason for this: "I think because now, skinny fit is the norm for men [...] in clothes and I'm 5'8 with, like a 42 chest and like a 34 – 36 waist so I'm more like boxy [draws rectangle with fingers]" (Ali, 2018). He described how if the suit trousers fit him on the waist, they would be too tight around the thigh. He goes onto describe the problem in terms of cultural expectations:

That's the real trauma with formalwear, and unless, you know, you sink like, £1000 on a suit [...] it's a tricky one, because the whole point in wearing a suit is to look smart, that's the single purpose of it, erm, so buying a slightly ill fitting suit defeats the purpose entirely. (Ali, 2018)

Ali highlights how the interaction between the body and the suit, can change the perception of the viewer. The suit has a particular resonance with masculinity. Tailoring journalist Eric Musgrave (2009: 8) claims, "If clothes maketh the man, then the most masculine outfit of them all is the suit. Oh, how well a man can express himself—and impress others—with his suit!". Given the societal pressure for men to look their best in suits, it is understandable Ali was concerned about what an ill-fitting suit might communicate about his aesthetic taste and judgement.

Ali linked his treasuring of the suit directly to the fit, he explained how the suit trousers had been altered by the shop to give more space around the top of the leg:

It's relatively new, I bought it this year, er, and it was treasured the moment that I tried on the newly fitted trousers, and they didn't bunch up round my groin, that was like, great, this is... this is good, I can walk in them...my thighs, there's like, still a bit of room, there's a bit of give. (Ali, 2018)

This statement demonstrates the value of well-fitted clothing from the perspective of the experience of wearing—how his body can move in the clothing. The change in the suit through alteration allowed Ali to feel smart because he knew his suit fit well as it was personalised to his body, facilitating ease of movement and bodily comfort. As it is unusual for him to find affordable suits that fit, he sees this suit as a special item.

Likewise for Bart, one reason he treasures his leather jacket is because it has been altered to fit. He had the sleeves shortened, personalizing it to his body shape. He describes his experience of buying leather jackets:

They were always like, unfitted for me, because I don't fit in the normal scales like um, like 'M', 'S' and whatever because they're all made for every person and I've got really broad shoulders and I've got lots of muscle so, if it's going to fit on my shoulder it's...the sleeves are like this [gestures to show that the sleeves would be far too long] if it's going to fit on my sleeves then it barely fits on my shoulders, so I kept buying leather jackets and they were always like, too long sleeves. (Bart, 2018)



Figure 6.2: Bart wearing his jacket

Again, the leather jacket is an item that is associated with masculinity and is seen as a classic item of menswear. Leather jackets are particularly associated with a cool, rebellious image due to their association with motorcycle gangs, rock stars and the actor Marlon Brando e.g. in *The Wild One* (Green, 2016). Having sleeves that are too long on a leather jacket, serves to undermine the cultural meanings associated with it.



The two items highlighted here, the suit and the leather jacket are classic investment items, purchases that cost more but will be used for a long time. Fashion magazines proclaim that a good suit or leather jacket can last a lifetime (or longer) (Lindley, 2013). The weight of cultural meaning associated with these particular items makes finding the 'right' one more stressful. As a *Vogue* columnist put it, the perfect leather jacket "had a lot to live up to" (Bahrenburg, 2009). For the investment garment, material alteration not only enhances the use value, but how the wearer perceives himself in relation to cultural standards. More subtly, through altering the garment, it was personalized to them, and the garment comes to represent the individual body. Better fitting clothing can make the wearer more comfortable with their own body image and appearance, and increase their confidence. This explains the close relationship with the individualised garment. The alterations made the garment difficult to replace, and the rarity of a finding a ready-made well-fitted garment contributed to the garment becoming treasured.

### 6.5.2 Separating wear from tear



Figure 6.3: The holes in Morgan's scarf where the label was removed

Appaduarai (1996: 75) differentiates wear from tear: “while in many cases wear is a sign of the right sort of duration in the social life of things, sheer disrepair or decrepitude is not”. This is a dilemma that the participants of this study also negotiated, deciding when the damage or wear to a garment means it can no longer be worn. Here, it was only Phoebe's skirt that was no longer worn, but this was not because she perceived it as unacceptably damaged but because it no longer fitted. She did wear her skirt once after the elastic waistband had gone, but found it uncomfortable because she had to add a belt and the skirt kept slipping down. The participants in this study highlighted a tension between wanting to wear and enjoy their treasured garments while also wanting to preserve them and shield them from damage. Abbie sums up this dilemma:

I wear it quite a lot but I'm also quite conscious that it's like, starting to like, fray round the edges and stuff so, um, yeah, I'm not sure, I'm a bit torn whether I should keep wearing until it completely dies or if I should like, preserve it and stop wearing it...I'm not sure. (Abbie, 2018)

Mark is also conflicted by wanting to use his coat for its intended purpose, and concerns over it getting damaged:

I use it like a normal coat, I use it, I want it to be used properly rather than me go 'oh, no don't touch me'. I'm going to live with 150 dogs, they're gonna [sic] jump up at me, they're probably going to ruin this coat if I wear it around them. (Mark, 2018)

The participants wanted to both wear and preserve the treasured garments in full knowledge of the conflict that the more a garment is worn, the more it will degrade.

One solution to this dilemma is limiting the amount of wear the garment receives, whether consciously or unconsciously. Tom did not wear his T-shirt for a long time because it was a gift and he did not "want anything to happen to it" (Tom, 2018). Now he only wears it for travelling. Similarly, Morgan only wears her scarf on airplanes and Ali restricts how often he wears his Mickey Mouse vest. Zoe will only take her bag to places where she thinks it will be 'respected'. These rules for the wearing of their garments mean that these items are worn semi-regularly. George (2018) offers a different perspective "I think if you love something you should wear it frequently and often"; he does not believe in saving things for best. All three of George's treasured garments had marks and damage, his strategy for preserving the skirt (Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5) was to wear it until it could no longer be worn because of damage, and afterward display it in a frame in his room.



Figures 6.4 (left) and 6.5 (right): Damage and stains on George's skirt

The marks, stains and 'damage' to George's shirt (Figures 6.6 and 6.7) form part of the reason why it is treasured. For George, the accumulation of paint marks, rips and missing buttons is testament to his work as a scenic creative artist: "what I like about it is that [...] I sort of remember where all the different paint comes from because of the different colours, so different companies and different jobs" (George, 2018). The paint marks and memories are added to every time he wears it for a new job.

George gave two reasons for keeping the shirt even though it is damaged beyond repair: "(a.) I still use it for work and, (b.) I think it's quite beautiful, just as an object it's quite a beautiful thing you know, it's like a [...] little abstract canvas" (George, 2018). For him, there is an aesthetic appreciation of the material degradation of the shirt, as he perceives the garment in artistic terms.





Figures 6.6 (left) and 6.7 (right): Damage and paint stains on George's shirt

George understands that his shirt will continue to change and decay while he continues to wear it for work:

I definitely know that there will come a time when I'm on a job, And it's so ripped and so torn and so broken that it will just transmogrify into, like, like a cloth you know? [...] I like that about it [...] you see people with like rags that they're, like, doing beautiful like rust textures on walls in the theatre and [...] you're like 'what did that used to be?' [laughs] Like, my grandmother's scarf! (George, 2018)

George views the transition of his shirt from work clothing to rags appear a natural one, something that commonly happens in his line of work as an artist. There is an inevitability about the future of the shirt, and comfort in that it will still be useful and part of his work even when it is no longer a shirt. It will still be used to help George create, and its useful life will be extended. Uniquely for this garment, degradation, damage and eventual decay is not something to be actively avoided but promoted as part of its lifecycle. Although the form of the garment will change, its purpose will remain work-related.

In summary, most participants were conflicted about how much they should wear their garments in order to balance their desire to use the item and their desire to preserve it. Limiting the use of the garment was noted as a strategy for prolonging the life of a garment. Other participants had plans in place to preserve their garment if and when it became too delicate to wear.

### **6.5.3 Garment Care: “Cared for with love and not much else”**

There was recognition from the participants that their treasured garments needed care, such as laundering and repairs, to prolong the lifespan. And, as textiles, they will eventually get damaged, decompose, become fragile and become unwearable in the future unless looked after, in Ingold’s phrase “the materials will win out” (2007:14). The participants said they cared about their items and wanted them to last a long time. However, it also became apparent that they did not care for their items as well as they could:

this is probably that one item I’ve ever had, where I go...that I’d be really sad if it went missing or got ruined or something. Saying that, I don’t keep it very well because it’s got quite a lot of stains on it [points at front], it’s quite muddy... As long as I look after it probably better than I do, there’s no reason why I can’t have this for the rest of my life. (Mark, 2018)

Ooooooh, I really hope it will stay forever but, as I said I need to be really careful with washing this, I mean I’m quite naughty I put this in the washing machine, I probably shouldn’t have done that, erm, but you can see how here [shows camera the hem of the shirt] it’s just fraying. (Rhuza 2018)

I should get it fixed, maybe I’ll take it to a tailor or something...how can, where can I go to get elastic? Someone to sort out the elastic? I don’t even know how I’d start to do that. (Phoebe, 2018)

I’ll get it dry...I should have had it dry cleaned before we did the interview but, that does need a dry clean, but it’s not as bad as [laughs] it’s not as bad as it looks. (George, 2018)



Figure 6.8: Broken elastic in Phoebe's Skirt

The participants admonish themselves with their own advice. The word 'should' or 'shouldn't' features prominently in these examples, evidence that the participants know what is required to care for their garments, and of the guilt that their care is wanting. There was a desire to repair broken items. Phoebe wanted to get the elastic repaired on her skirt in order to wear it again, but wanted to ask her Mum, the original owner of the skirt, what to do about it first. Rhuza (2018), who is confident in making and altering her own clothing wants to repair the fraying of her shirt with "a nice piece of silk or something [...] that could stop it from fraying because the, the thread will slowly start to disintegrate". However, these repairs had not gone beyond the planning stage. Similarly, George knew that his skirt should have been taken to the dry cleaners yet has not completed this task. This hesitation could reflect the busy lifestyle the participants lead, that even though they have the wherewithal, they still don't get round to it. But it could be that, consciously or unconsciously, they don't mind the wear; they see it as a part of the garment and its history. It is only when the condition of the garment prevents it from being worn that it becomes more urgent.

The only example of a fully realised repair was Rhuza's replacement button, a ceramic button that she made herself, of which she remarked, "plus, I made the



button for the very top of it so I even love it more” (Rhuza, 2018). This is an example of an individualising change, reminiscent of the menswear alterations, enhancing the personal meaning, and the reasons for treasuring.



Figure 6.9: Rhuza’s home-sewn top button

The practices the participants do undertake in order to care for their items are basic, but nevertheless represent a difference in how they care for the treasured garment compared to their other clothing.

I don’t really do anything very special with it, I just, I think I am a bit conscious of like how often I wash it [...] maybe I’ll start hand washing it? Erm, and caring for it like it’s a...like a designer piece of clothing or something. (Abbie, 2018)

I spent the money on it, and I want it to have a long...I want the longevity of it’s use, erm, so yeah, that’s in the original suit carrier, in the mahogany cupboard, it’s not just going to be thrown on the floor like a lot of items of clothing are, um, the ‘floordrobe’ is not suitable for that one. (Ali, 2018)

Erm, just by...I guess I just fold it up and keep it in a nice spot...I mean, it’s cashmere so it’s gotta be like, you can’t really throw it in the washer but to be honest, I don’t know if I can remember the last time I had it cleaned...so just cared for with love and not much else [laughs]. (Morgan, 2018)

Abbie’s reference to a designer piece points to a hierarchy of caring attention: that a designer label item deserves better care. Similarly, Ali points to expenditure on his



garment as a reason for caring for it better. But, for the most part, the care for the garments is emotional rather than physical care, as Morgan says, 'cared for with love'. The participants care about their garments in their anxiety around loss or damage. Mark worries about his jacket getting lost on the plane, Rhuza fears moths getting to her garment, and Abbie is concerned that her shirt is getting frayed. However, this emotional caring does not typically translate into material caring. While this led to some expressions of guilt, there was also something unexpressed, a reticence to interfere with something that was precious.

#### **6.5.4 Discussion of Altered States**

Belk (1988: 158) suggests that the items people are attached to form part of the extended self, and that "the more an object is part of one's extended self, the more care and attention it should receive". However, the form of that care and attention might not be simple and straightforward. Mugge et al. (2005) posited the more attached a person is to an object, the more likely they are use it with care and to repair it when it breaks. This study has found that although the treasured garments receive mental and emotional attention, practices of physical care are often lacking. There was some duty of effort and consideration acknowledged, but it did not lead to a set of remedial interventions to prolong the life of the treasured item.

Smith and Yates found their participants "did not wish to alter or repair their attachment garments, despite the garment's 'wear and tear', as they believed that would detract from the garment's intangible value" (2018: 56). In this study, the participants seem to wish to repair or alter their garments, but are slow or hesitant to carry them out. Although this hesitancy is not clear-cut, it could well originate in a prioritising of intangible values. Removing the marks of wear might remove evidence of their inhabitation and interaction with the garment. Here we distinguish between repair and care, the participants can care about the items without having them repaired. This is especially pertinent to George's shirt in which material degradation and damage is integral to the treasuring and meaning of the garment—had it not

been for that, the shirt would have remained the insensitive forced gift from his father.

The treasured garments continue to be worn despite damage, wearing only stops when the damage renders that the garment physically unwearable. The participants claim to care for their garments, but in practice, are slow to make repairs. They appear to want to avoid further damage, but not eliminate signs of wear completely. The participants also care for their garments through practices of wear, either by wearing it often or limiting the amount it is worn. Both are seen as ways of caring for the garment.

Prolonging the use and life of garments is of interest to sustainability in clothing and a number of strategies have been suggested. Fletcher (2012) points to durability in both design and use as one method. McQueen et al. (2017) found that laundering jeans less frequently prolonged their life span and suggested that individuals could be encouraged to alter their laundering habits in order to preserve their favourite items of clothing, which in turn is more environmentally sustainable. This was Abbie's stated approach. Other participants adopted a related approach by limiting the amount of wear, rather than the amount of care.

Fletcher (2012: 231) argued that the extended lives of clothing are determined less by "the physical durability of the garment [...] than a user's habit of mind fostering long-term use". However, while Fletcher argues that an ideology of use takes precedence over the strength of the user-object relation (2012: 236), this study suggests that for treasured garments, use and wear behaviours are motivated by the strength of the user-object relation. The garments remain in use despite damage, or wearing is rationed to preserve the life of the garment, both practices were due to emotional attachment. This behaviour can be described as 'conscious wearing', the participants are mediating their wearing habits in order to express their care for their garment, whether by 'loving it to death', or by limiting wear to make it last longer.

This research highlights the complexity in the attitudes towards wear, care and repair in treasured garments. The evidence does not support a straightforward case for individuals giving more remedial care for their garments because they are treasured, nor, necessarily refusing repair to preserve their authenticity. This study has revealed a tension in desiring both of these states, leading to delay tactics and guilty excuses on the part of participants.

## **6.6 Storing**

When Mark (2018) showed me where his coat was stored, he mockingly said, “I hang it up here on the coat rack—because it’s a coat”. For most participants, the garment did have a place or a home where it was stored, and that place was within the wardrobe with their other clothing. Treasured garments were stored in a practical manner, alongside other garments of the same type except in those cases where a specific purpose indicated a more specific place (as in Mark’s example above). Morgan mentioned that she always kept her scarf in the same place so she could easily find it when travelling, and Ali kept his bow tie in the pocket of the suit carrier so he knows it is with the suit. Abbie mentioned her T-shirt was stored ‘near the top’ of one of her drawers because she wears it so often.

Although many participants protested that their wardrobe was ‘a mess’ or had ‘no organisation’, they did then go on to describe how their wardrobes were organized. For example, Phoebe’s wardrobe was organized according to Marie Kondo’s (2011) ‘upward feeling’ principle, with clothes being organized by length with the longest items on the left, intended to give a feeling of uplift every time you look in the wardrobe. Storage of items in the wardrobe in general was determined by a wider organizational scheme rather than emotional attachment to a garment. For example George stored all his Indian fabrics together and all of his jackets were kept on one rail. There was always some organising principal, even if it had broken down. Although treasured garments were by and large stored with other garments of the same category, this might be in a slightly more careful way. Rhuza and Bart said that they kept items on wishbone-style hangers to ‘keep their shape’ in order to preserve

their neat condition, and Ali kept his suit in a suit cover to protect it, but none of these methods is unusual.

An exception to the rule was Zoe's bag displayed "as a piece of art" on the back of her door, while her other bags are hidden from view in a container. However, George planned to display his skirt once its useful life had ended, and Bart (2018) wished he had kept his shirt so he could "put it in a frame". Displaying or the planned display of garments gives them a purpose when they are not being used as clothing. When clothes are in the wardrobe they are hidden from view, and participants enjoyed looking at their garments because they found them beautiful.

Categorization of an object as treasured had little effect on the item's location in the wardrobe. What was more important to its location was frequency of wear and the type of garment. This study confirmed the findings of other wardrobe studies (Banim and Guy, 2001; Bye and McKinney, 2007; Woodward, 2007; Hertz, 2011) in finding that items were stored separately from the other clothes in the wardrobe if their use was permanently inactive (Cluver, 2008); an example being Bart's 'messy drawer' where his scarf and his hat were stored. Items that were dormant or only used occasionally were stored near to the bottom or back of drawers. Ali's vest had 'travelled through the wardrobe' as Banim and Guy (2001) observed, going from dormant in a suitcase under the bed to being stored in a drawer after he began wearing it again. Significantly, the findings relating to male participants mapped onto literature about female wardrobe practices suggesting previous findings are more widely applicable regardless of gender.

Space was a particular issue for these participants. The flats are all two-bedroom flats with one of the bedrooms being very small; some participants only rented a room, so most of their possessions were contained within that room. Restrictions on space meant that clothes are often stored on rails, in plastic storage boxes, in suitcases, on hooks on the door. The constraint on physical space also meant that the participants were acutely aware of how much they owned and their storage

limitations. Many mentioned 'having a clear out' recently, and one of the main reasons given was a lack of space to store their items.

The research had expected to find special storage practices for treasured garments, but the differences in storing of treasured items were more subtle. There was a desire to give the treasured garment a 'nice spot' (Morgan, 2018), but in practice only small changes were made in comparison to other items of clothing. The key feature of the storage of these garments is that participants knew and remembered their location in the wardrobe, even if this location was not particularly special.

## **6.7 Summary**

For the participants in this study, material and emotional resonances were intertwined. The sensual experience of the garment, especially touch, was an important feature in the feelings evoked, such as comfort, power or security. Concurring with Woodward and Fisher (2014) this study found that the garments are active agents in the creation of meaning due to their particular shape, construction and fabric. Sensual engagement was an initial attractor that enabled the layering of additional meanings over time. The treasured status of the item appeared to increase with wear and its opportunity to accumulate meanings, associations and memories. Despite this, a tension was observed between wanting to wear the item and wanting to preserve the item, with the participants recognizing that wearing an item caused 'wear' and devising strategies to address this.

The practices of caring for treasured garments were surprising insofar as they opposed expectations that these garments would be cared for and stored in a way that reflected their treasured status. There was an ambiguity as well in that participants' were happy to alter garments to personalize them to their body or style when first acquired, but reluctant to make changes later, even if repairs might prolong a garment's life. A range of care practices were recorded, but what was significant was the emotional labour of care, the participants knew where their

garments were in the wardrobe and worried about their survival in a way that was distinct from their other clothing.

More relevant to the storage decisions in the wardrobe were the type of garment and whether the garment was part of the 'active' or 'inactive' wardrobe. Treasured garments were regularly worn, occasionally worn, no longer worn and never worn, with the majority in active use. If unworn, they were stored in a separate place in the wardrobe. Most participants planned to keep their garments even when they could no longer wear them; and at this point they might travel in the wardrobe toward a special more permanent setting. The youthful age range studied may have been a significant factor in many of the items still in the wear phase of their lives.

## 7. Clothing and Emotion

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the emotions felt toward treasured garments and the feelings provoked by them. Wardrobe studies, with their focus on identity, have little to say about the items of clothing people love and why they feel this way. Concentration on entire wardrobes has missed relationships with single significant garments. Banim and Guy (2000: 207), while asserting that positive emotions associated with wearing garments was an important factor in keeping them, did not offer examples of what these positive emotions were, or a further analysis of how they affected retention.

The chapter begins by highlighting frequently used words in the interviews to uncover emotional content. The effect that treasured garments have on mood and their connection to feelings of love, happiness and joy follows. The chapter then reflects on feelings of comfort in relation to emotion in the context of treasured garments, before considering the impact of love on treasuring and a garment's longevity in the wardrobe.

### 7.2 Word Frequency

A word frequency analysis of the interview transcripts (see Table 7.1) uncovered some significant relationships. The analysis was adjusted to leave out words with less than four letters, and certain common incidental words were manually removed.<sup>6</sup> The table shows the top ten most used words in the transcripts with these conditions applied.

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<sup>6</sup> Words removed in order of frequency high – low are Yeah, just, think, laughs, really, know, things, kind, quite, something, going, probably, well.

**Table 7.1: Word frequency analysis**

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage <sup>7</sup>	Similar Words
Wearing	419	1.52%	Wear, wearing, wears
Clothing	243	0.88%	Cloth, clothes, clothes, clothing
Shirt	200	0.72%	Shirt, shirts, shirt
Look	197	0.71%	Look, looked, looking, looks, look
Time	162	0.59%	Time, times
Love	159	0.58%	Love, loved, lovely, loves, loving
Feel	149	0.54%	Feel, feeling, feels
Shop	135	0.49%	Shop, shopping, shops
Years	124	0.45%	Year, years
Good	116	0.42%	Good, good

As one might expect, the word 'clothing' appears high in frequency, but the activity of 'wearing' clothing appears highest. The next most frequent clothing-related activity was shopping, seen in the root word 'shop'. The word 'shirt' appears third in overall frequency, reflecting that more T-shirts and shirts were discussed than any

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<sup>7</sup> Weighted Percentage is the frequency of the word relative to the total words counted. The weighted percentage assigns a portion of the word's frequency to each group so that the overall total does not exceed 100%.



other garment type. The participants used 'look' in multiple ways: to describe a clothing style, the process of self-styling, and the act of searching for a particular garment. The frequency suggests that visual appearance was an important aspect of clothing for the participants. The word 'look' also related to time in some instances in the sense of 'looking back' when reflecting on garments or life events. The emergence of 'time' and 'years' in the analysis confirmed the sense I had from reading the transcripts, that many of the participants were looking back at their clothing histories and describing how their styles had changed over time; it also highlights the discussions around how long items had been owned.

Notable with the high frequency list are the words 'love' and 'feel'.<sup>8</sup> When coding the data,<sup>9</sup> the category of 'clothing and emotion' turned out to be one of the largest categories, with subcategories that included 'love' and 'comfort'. Love was one of the largest subcategories. It is a word that the participants used unprompted; there was nothing in the semi-structured interview guide or questions that mentioned the word, yet participants often used 'love' in connection with their clothing and treasured garments. As Table 5.1 shows, love is the sixth most used word in the transcripts with 'feel' coming next, indicating that when participants discussed their treasured garments, they verbalized love and feeling frequently. While not wanting to give undue emphasis to what people say as opposed to what they mean, the word frequency findings pointed toward a need for further analysis examining love and how it relates to treasured garments.

### **7.3 Love**

Unprompted, the participants used the word 'love' to describe how they felt about their treasured garments at every stage of the treasuring process: acquisition, wearing, keeping and caring. Love continued throughout the relationship. For some, it was love at first sight: "As soon as I found it I was like 'Oh wow, I've like, hit the jackpot, I love this' instantly, yeah" (Phoebe, 2018); and, "I literally looked at it and I

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<sup>8</sup> In the database of the British National Corpus, time, good, and look are high frequency words, so their appearance here is less relevant. See <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> The software Nvivo was used to assign coding. The software is able to scan all of the transcripts to provide a list of most frequently used words. The version displayed here also searched for similar words, which are shown in the right-hand column.

was I like I love that bag” (Zoe, 2018). The instant attraction motivated by appearance increased as the garments they loved were worn. Zoe did not only love her bag, she loved that she and her mother shared that love, and felt that brought them closer together (see Section 5.3.1). Rhuza (2018) described her love for her item increasing through personalisation “I made the button for the very top of it so I even love it more”.

George gave love as a reason for wearing his garments and talked about his decision to wear clothing he loved all the time, regardless of what others might think. When discussing where and when he wore his treasured Indian skirt, he used the example of the skirt to describe the development of his style and the types of clothes he loves to wear.

It was one of the things, I think a lot of what happened with my personal style was going to festivals and then realizing, I love dressing like this. Why can't I dress like this in town? And then I thought like, if everyone did that, if everyone who went to a festival dressed like that all the time, it would be a really nice, colourful, beautiful fashionable city. But I think lots of people go to festivals because they feel like they can't wear what they want to, you know people...I have a creative job where I can wear whatever the hell I want, lots of people can't. Erm, so I was like I'm just gonna start trying to wear clothes that I love all the time. Because I think that's, that's important to how you feel long term isn't it. (George, 2018)

George's decision about what to wear was a conscious one made when reflecting on his feelings about wearing loved garments. Wearing his skirt made him happy, and he didn't need to wait for a festival to dress in clothing he loved. The happiness he gets from wearing such clothing is enough to offset the occasional negative reaction to his way of dressing:

And I think whenever I've worn that it's just given me joy, just makes me really happy and it's funny because so many people, not loads of people, but, you know, you do get the occasional...someone says something because you're wearing weird clothes [...] or, you're like, the person wearing something odd and I'm just like mate, if you don't find this, like, fucking brilliant then, what's the point. Like, it's beautiful, look at the stitching, look at the stitching! Erm, yeah I love

it and I think it's er, it's a shame that people feel like they can't be more adventurous with what they wear because it makes me really happy I think [smiles]. (George, 2018)

George uses the words 'love', 'happy' and 'joy' to describe how he feels when he is wearing his treasured garment; the positive emotions are linked to one another. Dressing in a way that reflects what he loves makes George want the same for other people, but he recognizes societal norms that prevent some people from dressing in the clothing they love. George has enough confidence to be able to deal with negative reactions to his clothing choices. He commented that wearing something he loved gave him more confidence and a feeling of purpose, "I'm wearing something I love, I can achieve anything you know" (George, 2018). For George, wearing the clothing he loves emboldens him to dress in a way that makes him feel good, rather than mediating his preferences in order to conform.

Abbie spoke about how she actively used clothing to positively influence her mood, something that began with developing her own style during the first year of university:

I think when I dress in more like, fun, exciting clothes it makes me behave in a more fun and exciting way, so I think if I dress like, based on how I'm feeling it can be quite obvious erm, what my mood is, but yeah I think wearing exciting clothes affects my mood in a positive way, so I try and dress quite fun most of the time. (Abbie, 2018)

There is a link between what she wears and not only how she feels, but how she behaves. She makes a conscious effort to use her clothing to alter her behaviour in a way that is beneficial to her wellbeing.

Asked why he kept his items George replied, "I guess loving them" (2018). George still wears all of his items, but Bart no longer wears his hat. Bart offered as explanation, "the hat, I don't wear anymore, I just love it" (2018). Love was reason enough for keeping their garments. This suggests that for treasured garments, love is important to both keeping and wearing, but garments do not have to be worn to be loved.

### 7.3.1 Joy

One of the most famous dictats of the popular de-cluttering guide *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo (2011) is that possessions should ‘spark joy’. It is the only criteria Kondo gives for deciding on whether to keep or dispose of an item. Two of the participants in this study had recently read Kondo and had organised their wardrobes according to her principles. Morgan reflected:

It was really nice to do because it kind of gives you that sense of going ‘I know I’m getting rid of this thing that I really did love at one time and I can appreciate that, but I also don’t need it anymore’ and so I think I’m quite good at, at that, at least nowadays. (Morgan, 2018)

For Morgan, decluttering was an opportunity to recognise that love for certain items had passed, enabling her to let them go. She did this the weekend before the interview so she was confident that the clothing she had kept ‘sparked joy’. Her experience also highlights that you can fall out of love with an item of clothing.

Phoebe explained the difficulty in following Kondo’s advice;

it’s really hard to find something that brings you joy and that’s what Marie Kondo’s advice is, it’s like hold a thing, turn it round, try it on, and like see if it instantly like, gives you that sense of joy, I...I really like that as a guide. (Phoebe, 2018)

She described two items in terms of bringing joy, one that was a ‘mistake’, and her treasured item that brings her joy.

I regret it! It just brings me like, pain now [laughs], [...] I actually was er, on my way out to work, I had a pile like [of clothes], to return, and I put it on and I was just like, I’ll wear this, this is fine, and then later I was like, aw, it’s not very comfy, like, it’s not...yeah, it’s just not bringing me joy (Phoebe, 2018).

Phoebe described the pain giving item (a skirt) in terms of comfort: not comfortable. Comfort was used by participants to describe how their treasured garments gave joy and as something they looked for in clothing. Of her treasured garment Phoebe said, “I feel, yeah, sort of joyous, like the colours make me feel happy” (Phoebe, 2018). Like Abbie and George, dressing in bright colours gives Phoebe a sense of happiness. However, she did allude to the anxiety she faces around clothing decisions, both

purchasing and keeping, but ultimately felt “the things that I really love and use all the time do bring me some joy so I should just worry less about it” (Phoebe, 2018).

When discussing clothing that made them happy, the participants focused on how they felt in an outfit. Their mood appeared unconcerned about judgement by others. There was a sense that the participants were dressing for their own comfort, style or happiness, especially when describing their most treasured garments. Wearing a loved garment seemed to shield them from concern about the gaze of others. The positive emotions of love, happiness and joy were found to be associated with the garments people treasure. These are also linked to feelings of comfort and confidence in wearing.

### **7.3.2 Discussion of Clothing and Love**

It is generally frowned upon socially to love your things. Stallybrass and Jones argue, “In capitalist societies, to love things is something of an embarrassment. Things are, after all, ‘mere’ things. To accumulate things is not to give them life” (2000: 8). From the consumption studies perspective, Susan Schultz et al. (1989: 365) asked participants what feelings they experienced when thinking about an object they had a strong attachment to. They found that ‘happiness’ most frequent with ‘love’ next; comfort and joy were also mentioned. Richens (1997) also found that love was a common emotion related to consumption. On one hand it has been found that people form emotional bonds with objects, but on the other hand this is treated as something to feel ashamed of.

This paradox can be observed in the difference between the advice of Kondo and other popular wardrobe gurus. Before Kondo, the received wisdom was to ‘throw out anything you haven’t worn in a year’ or ‘throw away anything that doesn’t suit you’ or ‘throw away anything that doesn’t fit’ (Wan, 2018). Yet people struggled to follow such advice and kept these things, prompting academics to ask why people kept things they no longer wore (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007). What the previous advice assumed was that our relationship to our clothing and wardrobes is purely functional. What Kondo recognised is that this relationship is

also deeply emotional. Her books give people permission to consider and celebrate the emotional relationship they have with their clothing and to keep things for emotional reasons. If it sparks joy, it stays, it need have no other use.

That emotional relationship is signalled by the word 'love'. There were different targets for love in this study. It was used to describe shops, "I love that shop" (Mark, 2018); categories of clothing, "I love jackets" (George, 2018); and clothes in general, "I love my clothes to be fairly honest" (Rhuza, 2018). Aaron Ahuvia's (2005: 171) also found a wide range of objects that people said they loved, and posited that the category of 'things people love' is broader than special possessions. Likewise, it was found here that treasured garments were not the only garments participants loved. Therefore treasured garments are a specific category of loved garments.

Rebecka Smith and Julia Yates (2018) used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to investigate the experience of wearing clothes that made them feel happy; participants wore their happy outfit during the interview. Smith and Yates found a link between the emotions of happiness and love, and noted their participants were in love with their clothes (2018: 14). Smith and Yates suggest, "when we love clothes they influence our sense of self", thus highlighting the importance of 'intentionally managing identity' (2018: 14). Similarly, this study found that loved garments helped build confidence, and are used to support the wearer's identity. The Smith and Yates (2018) study also linked clothing to both 'resilience' and 'managing moods'. In this study, participants used their treasured garments to manage their moods: George wears loved clothes to foster joy; Abbie finds that fun clothes help her behave in a more exciting way. Loved clothing also imparted the resilience to fend off negative outside reactions, adding to evidence that wearing clothing that is loved can make a person feel more confident.

Sarah Ahmed approaches happiness from the perspective of affect, affect being the unconscious counterpart of emotion. She conceives happiness as "intentional in the phenomenological sense (directed toward objects), as well as being affective ([from] contact with objects)" (Ahmed, 2010: 31). What she calls a halo effect is how this happiness attaches to what surrounds the object—the circumstances when it was

received, the location, and the giver, which each become happy by association; “some things become happy for us, if we imagine they will bring happiness to us” (Ahmed, 2010: 32). The consequence is described in value terms: “Things become good, or acquire their value as good, insofar as they point toward happiness” (Ahmed, 2010: 34). Ahmed’s theory allows us to conceptualise seeking of positive emotion as an end in itself, apart from the construction of identity. This can help to explain how a garment ‘sparks joy’ or prompts love at first sight without reference to identity-supporting qualities. Treasuring cannot be explained in terms of confidence building or mood elevating alone; a more sustained level of feeling good attaches to many garments.

Lucia Ruggerone rejects the idea of using clothes to form an “intellectually orchestrated representation of the self” (2017: 579). Instead she refers to a “fleshy experience of life we sense but cannot fully describe” (Ruggerone, 2017: 580). This sense has been noted by other researchers of material culture and fashion who note that participants are unable to verbalize why or how they feel about a particular item of clothing (Klepp & Bjerk, 2014; Woodward, 2007). Ruggerone describes the act of wearing a favourite dress as one “in which our bodies transform as a result of encounters with other bodies”, such other bodies including clothing, adding “if the power of acting of the body is increased and expanded, then we experience an emotion of joy” (2017: 580). This is a feeling that is pre-cognitive, which helps to account for individual’s struggle to explain why they love something, only that they do. In this sense, the feeling of love at first sight, and the serendipity or fate ascribed to finding the treasured garments can be encompassed. So too the apparent thoughtlessness with which George grabbed his father’s shirt to paint in, or George’s choice to put on a jacket that suddenly seemed ‘right’, or Tom’s decision to wear his T-shirt to travel in. The participants could not give reasons for any of these actions, done without conscious thought. The clothing encounter offered them new possibilities of becoming that led to the feelings of love and emotional connection that attach to treasured garments.

## **7.4 Comfort**

Bart, Tom, Abbie, George, Morgan, Rhuza, and Phoebe each described their treasured garments as 'comfortable', 'comfy' or 'comforting'. All participants talked about the importance of comfort to describe how they like to feel in clothing, or in explaining why their treasured garment was special to them. The concept of comfort was also used in selecting clothing to wear. It was important to them to feel comfortable in whatever they were wearing, and comfort was something they specifically looked for in their clothing. Miller and Woodward (2012) recognised two meanings of comfort in relation to clothing and argued that the significance of the term 'comfortable' "lies in the way it creates this elision between what might otherwise be recognized as two separate domains" (73). The expression 'comfortable' is able to fuse together the physical and the social experiences of comfort. But it is important to note that comfort had three meanings for my participants: the physical sense of comfort from the qualities of the garment, the social comfort of feeling they fit in and looked good, and finally, the emotional comfort, or comforting, that the clothing offered.

### **7.4.1 Physical Comfort**

Tom and Abbie linked the physical attributes of their T-shirts to comfort, for Abbie softness due to wear: "I like it because, well firstly because it's really soft because it's really old so it's really comfortable" (Abbie, 2018). For Tom, the roomy fit: "it's quite a big T-shirt, it's quite a comfortable T-shirt so, you know, you want kinda comfy clothes when you're travelling for any distance don't you?" (Tom, 2018). Phoebe expressed the sense of contentment she found in her treasured garment as: "it's stretchy, it's comfy" (2018). Here, Phoebe implies the garment is comfortable because it is stretchy, or in any case, that there is a close association between the two qualities. These examples all relate to the material nature of the garment, how the garments physically feel to wear, and their relation to the body that is understood as comfort. These physical reasons relate mainly to the wearing of the



garment, to the relationship between body and garment, although Abbie's connection of ageing with comfort points also to the factor of keeping.

#### **7.4.2 Social Comfort**

We have seen that participants felt that clothing had the ability to alter their mood. In turn, there was link between the participants' mood and how comfortable they felt in their clothing. Discussing why he treasured his leather jacket, Bart (2018) reflected, "if I wear something 'over the top' I just don't feel comfortable and this one is just about right it's, it's you know, it's decent, it's quality, but it's not like, it's not loud". To Bart, for comfort, it is important not to stand out. He described what Woodward (2007) calls 'getting it right', when an item of clothing fits both the body and the situation. Getting it wrong can lead to anxiety and low mood: "if I wear something really shit, I do really feel, really down, it does affect me, my mood" (Bart, 2018). His treasured jacket is a reliable item, allowing him to feel right in most situations.

Zoe also linked mood to comfort:

I feel like when, I don't feel like really comfortable, like really confident, or sometimes even like...it's really shallow, but if I'm not in like a really good outfit that I like, that I feel comfortable in or confident then, I won't be in a very good mood (Zoe, 2018).

Both participants use the word 'comfortable' to describe feeling good in an outfit; they linked feeling comfortable in their clothing to confidence and mood elevation. Confidence describes the public side of this mood elevation, derived from the social comfort of fitting in, and feeling the outfit 'works', that is, looks right—both to the self and others.

#### **7.4.3 From Comfortable to Comforting—Emotional Comfort**

Morgan (2018) described her garment as both 'comforting' and 'comfortable'—each distinct. She also connected comfort to happiness saying, "the thing that makes me the happiest is being able to feel like cosy and comforted". She refers to her scarf as

a 'comforting travel buddy'. The first time Morgan wore her treasured scarf was on a flight from America to the UK:

[W]rapping this around me and kind of, reminiscing on my friends and the night we'd had and how lovely it was and thinking about exciting next steps and feeling very cosy and like, comforted (Morgan, 2018).

For Morgan, being physically wrapped in the scarf and engaged in warm reflections on her past experiences were merged. The scarf provided both physical and emotional comfort to her when she was apprehensive about her future life. This feeling of emotional comfort from a garment is distinct from other participants' feeling socially or physically comfortable. For Miller and Woodward, "a garment that is comfortable is one that they [the wearer] essentially do not feel at all. They are conscious neither of the clothes nor of their body" (Miller & Woodward, 2012: 82). But Morgan finds her scarf comforting precisely because of its presence and its feeling. Awareness of the scarf on her body is comforting because of its softness and warmth, as well as the emotion and memories associated with it. The garment has the ability to comfort by providing a reminder of stability and continuity. Here, the scarf elides physical and emotional comfort; Morgan likened wrapping the scarf around her on a plane to being 'wrapped in love' (2018). The entanglement of all three forms of comfort was, for the participants, an aspect of their treasured garments.

#### **7.4.4 The Comfort of Treasured Garments**

One of Miller and Woodward's (2012) key findings about jeans was that they made wearers feel comfortable. That was how their participants explained their choice of jeans. Participants in this study also frequently mentioned comfort as a quality of their most treasured garments, but in the context of love and feeling. Miller and Woodward (2012) gave much space to unpacking the word 'comfortable' in relation to jeans, which they described as ordinary, and emphasised jeans importance for the construction of the everyday. A treasured garment, being out of the ordinary, seems entirely the opposite to a pair of jeans. Miller and Woodward suggested that jeans

are superior in eliding physical and social comfort, but we have seen that that is a characteristic of treasured garments as well. This section uses the findings of this study to both question and extend the findings of Miller and Woodward.

Miller and Woodward (2012: 82) summarize three semantic fields within the term comfort:

1. A more physical and instrumental meaning
2. The need to feel comfortable, in the sense of appropriate, under the gaze of others within a public situation
3. The longer term process by which people find a sense of who they are, their personal comfort zone.

They suggest that these fields are interlinked, that physical comfort contributes to feeling comfortable in a situation and, furthermore this allows individuals to actively shape their identity: “Comfort is far more than just the feel of the fabric, as this physical also encodes a sense of what seems suitable or appropriate for a particular person” (Miller and Woodward, 2012: 65).

In this study, Bart’s relationship to his leather jacket parallels Miller and Woodward’s theory of comfort; the jacket allows him to fit into most situations where he feels both physically and socially comfortable. Explaining the third semantic meaning of comfort, Miller and Woodward use the “‘Goldilocks phenomenon’ the spot that’s ‘just right’” (2012: 77). In Bart’s interview, he uses almost exactly the same phrase, saying his leather jacket is ‘just about right’. Bart has found a garment that both fits his body, his social awareness and his sense of himself.

Miller and Woodward (2012: 77) argue that jeans “make people feel more comfortable than other garments because they elide the physical idea of comfort with the social concern about how the wearer looks in public”, asserting that jeans stand outside of fashion. Bart’s leather jacket and George’s denim one satisfy similar needs, acceptable wear for most situations, what George called ‘utilitarian comfort’. Like jeans, these are ‘classic’ garments considered perennially fashionable. This opens the question whether it is the garment itself – jeans, leather jacket, denim jacket that makes people feel comfortable, or the connection they have to the garment. In this regard, Miller and Woodward’s argument about the particular

comfort of jeans needs further examination. It could be that it is one particular pair or style of jeans, and the memories associated with them, which make people feel more comfortable. The comfort of jeans could also be traced to how they fit the body, take on its shape and patterns of wear unique to the owner. Had they examined other types of garment, perhaps they would have found that comfort is what individuals are seeking in those as well. Just as looking at wardrobe as a whole, looking at garments as a class can obscure individual relationships with garments.

The comfort of treasured garments does not need to include social comfort. George's skirt worn in an urban setting made him feel powerful; his comfort resides in love for the garment that brings him joy. These feelings displace the need to feel comfortable under the gaze of others. Few of the treasured garments in this study were particularly 'fashionable', and fashionability was not a reason for treasuring. The evidence suggests that, wearing treasured garments, the participants were less self-conscious, confident that the garment reflected their identity and they could wear it well. Unlike jeans or classic clothing items, treasured garments may not be suitable for a variety of occasions, and some participants reserved wearing to specific occasions. In these cases, the treasured garment was selected because it fulfilled the role well, allowing the participant to feel comfortable and confident in that situation and positively affecting their feelings.

Phoebe drew attention to a garment that failed to elide the boundaries between the three different senses of the word comfort. Her stripy dress was 'comfy' to wear but she can only wear it if she is feeling the part:

it like, clings to my bum [laughs], so it's not something that I would wear like, if I wasn't already feeling quite like, confident, and just like 'Yeah, my bum's really big!' [laughs]. It also like sags at the tummy so I think [puts her hands to her waist], I like, I normally wear things that kind of tuck here [holds her waist] because my waist is like, small and then my thighs are huge, so to wear something that hangs off the waist and then clings on my bum is just not something I would normally go for. (Phoebe, 2018)

Rather than the dress changing her mood, she has to already be feeling confident because the dress is tighter than she is used to. When she wears it she feels smart and 'comfy', but if not up to wearing it she worries about being 'on show'. Although how the dress fits her body doesn't change, sometimes Phoebe puts it on and feels confident and comfortable, while other days she can feel self-conscious. This highlights how the mood of the wearer can affect how clothing feels and looks. A garment can both provide confidence or rely on confidence in order to be worn, in both cases, it is associated with the feeling of confidence and subsequent comfort this provides.

Even though Phoebe describes the dress as 'comfy', it makes her very aware of her own body, which, for Miller and Woodward is the antithesis of comfort: "being comfortable is defined in opposition to feeling self conscious [...] comfort is about being able to take that body for granted" (2012: 82). They argue the more confident a person feels, the less likely they are to feel self-conscious. This is why Phoebe says she has to be feeling confident in order to wear her dress, but she can still feel body conscious when wearing this item of clothing. On confident days the body consciousness described is viewed as positive, "I feel like comfy and myself, and mm, maybe a little bit aware of everything being on show [smiles]" (Phoebe, 2018). Here she links comfort and identity. Miller and Woodward's (2012) definition of comfort as "being able to take the body for granted" (82) is therefore inadequate because it does not allow for the comfort and confidence felt by being aware of the body and garment.

Phoebe was the only participant that exhibited a tension in relation to their treasured garment, the only person that said she might divest herself of this garment one day. The dress is treasured because of wearing it on her first date with her partner marking the transition between friendship and love interest. She reflected on the meeting, realising that they had both dressed up for the occasion: "I guess at that time maybe it made me feel like confident and that I was dressing up and like that kind of putting on a character when you put clothes on, I think that's what I did then" (Phoebe, 2018). On the most significant occasion of wearing, Phoebe

remembers that it gave her more confidence, whereas now she feels she has to summon more confidence in order to wear it.

Comfort is personal and relational, material and emotional. What one person finds comfortable another might find uncomfortable. In terms of social comfort, Bart felt comfortable fitting in, while George felt comfortable standing out. The objective comfort of a particular garment would be impossible to state, as it is dependent on personal preference and cultural norms. From the examples given, it is clear that people use different strategies to take advantage of the ability of clothing to affect mood and well-being. For Abbie it is wearing things that are ‘fun and exciting’, George wears the things he loves, Bart wants to feel like he fits in, while Zoe seeks the comfort that comes from confidence. The complexities of the relationship of comfort to confidence, love and treasured garments have been highlighted: mood can affect how the wearer sees themselves, clothing that was once comfortable can have the opposite effect, feelings of love can lend confidence to eschew the opinion of others. What treasured garments have in common is the powerful effect to induce or sustain comfort.

### **7.5 Do Loved Clothes Last?**

It has been posited that the emotional attachment individuals have with their garments could be harnessed to promote sustainable fashion behaviors (Smith & Yates, 2018). Smith and Yates found that when people “had a bond with their clothes [it] surpassed the need to replace” (2018: 28). In the field of fashion design ‘emotionally durable design’ (Chapman, 2014) has been promoted in which designing to encourage emotional bonds hopes to encourage consumers to keep clothes longer. Chapman points out the importance of products that “the user can get to know and assign value to in the long term” (2014: 166). He links the emotion, love and attachment with an item’s value to the consumer. This is what we see in the examples of treasured garments; the participant’s emotional relationship with these garments meant they planned to retain them even after they can no longer be worn.

This can also be seen in popular culture, the hashtag on Instagram #lovedclotheslast set up by Fashion Revolution, a campaigning group for sustainability in the fashion industry, is used as a medium to share sustainable fashion tips and advice (see Figure 7.1).



Figure 7.1: Example of Instagram post tagged #lovedclotheslast, (treechicco, 2019:Online)

Whitson-Smith (2018) examined motivations and barriers to the prolonged use of clothing in order to better understand consumer's behaviour from a sustainable fashion perspective. She found that the material elements such as comfort, fit, ease of care and wardrobe organisation were motivations for prolonged clothing use (2018: 116).<sup>10</sup> She disputed the effectiveness of 'emotionally durable design' concluding, "emotional attachment tended to motivate long-term *storage* rather than prolonged *wear*" (Whitson-Smith, 2018: 121). Long-term storage is seen as less sustainable, as although the garment is not being thrown away, it may be replaced with a new item. While Whitson-Smith's findings suggest that an emotional

<sup>10</sup> Barriers to prolonged use included perception of self, change in personal circumstances, length of ownership and outfit formation (Whitson-Smith, 2018: 116)

relationship with clothing has little relation to how long they are worn for, the current study revealed that emotional feelings about clothing are entangled with the physical comfort they provide. This was amplified in the case of treasured garments. The research found that feelings of love and emotional connection with a garment were a reason for wearing a garment, and continuing to wear that garment until further wear threatened destruction.

There did have to be some synergy between identity expressed in style preferences and the emotional realm. Bart's attachment to the scarf that his father gave him did not promote wear, because he didn't feel it suited him. However, in both Morgan's and Tom's cases, concerning garments they would not have acquired for themselves, the emotional connection was significant in their decision to wear, and to continue to wear their items. Part of the emotional attachment to a garment comes from its material properties. Insofar as this study found garments that were kept for emotional reasons but unworn, and, conversely that worn garments had some practical comfort-giving properties, the findings of this study support those of Whitson-Smith (2018). However, as this research is concerned with prolonged wear and keeping motivated through treasuring rather than sustainability, the study does indicate that loved clothes can last. Where a loved garment is divested, such as Bart's shirt, it is accompanied by regret.

## **7.6 Summary**

The chapter began by focusing on feelings for the treasured garment, with love given as a motivation for both keeping and wearing. Treasured garments were also identified as bringing happiness and joy to the participants. It is suggested that love is something participants direct towards treasured garments and happiness and joy are emotions that the garments give back – participants say they love their garments and that their garments bring them joy. This implies recognition of the agency of the garments in the process of love, joy and treasuring and that the relationship can be bidirectional. The ability of the treasured garment to positively affect mood came through strongly in the evidence, often overriding the more commonly cited wearing



of clothing to fit in. A link was identified between participants feeling confident and comfortable. In treasured garments comfort often led to increased confidence.

This chapter has suggested a modification to Miller and Woodward's analysis of comfort in a number of ways. Firstly, the addition of emotional comfort or comforting, as evidenced with Morgan's scarf. Secondly, by questioning whether feeling comfortable is an absence of feeling the garment or being aware of the body as Miller and Woodward (2012) suggest. The participants linked comfort to both the awareness of the garment and their bodies in that garment, so a rethinking of this definition of comfort is required. Thirdly, the evidence provided by this study questioned whether jeans as a class of garment really are superior in providing comfort, as suggested by Miller and Woodward, instead this research indicates that how the wearer feels about and in a garment may be the deciding factor as to levels of comfort reported, regardless of what the garment is.

Individuals do not only love garments for abstract reasons such as memory and identity, but take into account practical considerations such as fit, fabric texture and style. The material elements of treasured garments offer hooks for emotional attachments. The literature of affect was utilised to assist understanding in the pre-cognitive feeling of connection, that is felt rather than clearly described. Treasured garments were shown to have a high 'affective' value. Whilst these feelings are distinct from identity and can be separated from it, they are closely related. The next chapter explores identity, narrative and biography in treasured garments in more depth.

## **8. Treasured Garments and Biography**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the role of treasured garments in the stories people tell about themselves and their clothes. Firstly, it considers the role of treasured garments in transitions from one phase of life to another; secondly, it explores how participants incorporate garments in their identity through meanings that make the garments 'theirs', and thirdly, it examines the social connectivity of treasured garments that maintain both familial and personal identities. The chapter then looks at how treasured garments enabled participants to tell their stories, and the thread of continuity that treasured garments provided in their biographies.

### **8.2 Treasured Garments and Life Transitions**

The majority of participants' treasured garments were acquired during, or accompanied them through a life transition. From common practice, we can observe that markers of life transitions are often kept: babies' first shoes, christening robes, wedding dresses and fashion accessories (especially jewellery) of deceased loved ones. However, for my participants, the garments singled out were not garments associated with formalised life transitions but ordinary garments that were associated with times of change.

Half of the twenty-two treasured garments discussed in the interviews were related to a life transition. These garments belonged to eight of the ten participants; the remaining two participants, Bart and Rhuza, did not refer to life transitions directly in their interviews. Bart's interview centred on finding his personal style and items that fit into it, which indirectly relates to life transitions. Only Rhuza's interview focused more on present matters: the love she had for her clothes, their material elements (fabric, pattern, fit, design) and her enjoyment wearing them.

When participants reflected upon why a particular garment was treasured, moving from one stage of life to another was often referenced directly. Mark highlighted the timing of the acquisition and subsequent use of his coat:

It was kind of, the significance of coming out of that relationship and moving on from that to, this was kind of that trip [...] was kind of like the bridge between ok that's what I was and now this is where I want to be and this [...] It kind of helped me move on, [...] The whole trip if you like, and the coat, it kind of started with the buying of the coat.  
(Mark, 2018)

Mark identifies the coat as a marker of the beginning of lasting life changes. When considering the possibility of purchasing another coat if this one were to be lost or damaged, Mark emphasised that the potential new item:

would never mean quite as much to me because it, it wouldn't have been at a time where I was going through such a transition. It would just be another coat that I'd buy. (Mark, 2018)

At the time of the interview, Mark was about to embark on a longer trip to Canada to spend six months working outdoors as a tour guide or dog musher, inspired by his original holiday. The coat accompanied, even aided, his transition from his old life as a young professional with a long-term partner to his new life as a single traveller living and working abroad. This was not only about going from a relationship to being single, but about changing his surroundings to better reflect his interests and passions for the outdoors.



Figure 8.1: AW 16/17 Woolrich Campaign. (Indy Mag: Online). Image emphasising outdoors/ countryside



Figure 8.2: AW 18/19 Woolrich Campaign. (The Source: Online). Image emphasising city/ urban life

The garment itself, a Woolrich coat was particularly suited for this role. Brands such as Woolrich (also Canada Goose, North Face, etc.) have become increasingly connected to urban spaces, marketed to people living in cities. Once regarded as technical outdoor wear sold only in specialist shops, Woolrich is now seen as a luxury brand, sold in high end department stores. Such brands emphasize their heritage, reputation for quality and ‘best in class’ experience. It is not unusual to see people walking the streets of London or New York wearing Woolrich. This can be seen in recent advertising campaigns by the brand (see Figures 8.2 and 8.3). The coat can bridge these two sides of Mark’s identity: his urban, London life and his countrified Canadian one, read according to context as city fashion or functional outdoors gear.

The change was not just in Mark’s circumstances but in his attitude to buying clothing: “It was the first time I’d really, I’d bought something really quality [...] That was, I know I’m going to have for the rest of my life” (2018). He described how his approach to clothing had changed over time:

I'm 33 now, and I went through this very exciting transition about three years ago where you go from I just wanna buy [...] clothes because they're cheap and they kind of fit, to actually, I'm going to spend a little bit more, on something that's a bit better quality, that will last me a bit longer. (Mark, 2018)

He linked this to his stated strategy of finding the 'perfect' version of each item. He described moving away from fast fashion retailers such as H&M and Uniqlo to slightly more expensive heritage brands known for their quality, such as Levis and Dr. Martens. Mark's choices highlight loyalty to brands that emphasize functionality, authenticity and an element of never being out of fashion. The brands he now favours have stood the test of time and are famous for the items that Mark selects. This allows him to dress in a simple manner (jeans, T-shirts, boots) but also to show he has an awareness of clothing classics. The Woolrich coat is emblematic of this approach because his 'Artic Parka' is the brand's signature design that has remained largely unchanged since its inception. Mark framed this as his attitude shifting due to age, but it also reflects the Millennial trait of selecting products to suit ethical values (see Section 4.2.2). The continuity of the garment is important to him, he feels he will have the coat for the rest of his life and he will have an ongoing relationship with it. The physical garment anchors Mark's experience, giving him something tangible and material from a significant time in his life, as well as something useful that he enjoys wearing. It points towards past successful decisions he made and allows him to project further success in the future in his new lifestyle.

Similarly, Tom (2018) points to the timing of the acquisition, and the significance of that timing, when discussing his treasured T-shirt: "*when* I acquired it and what that represented to me":

I was [...] at a bit of junction in my life [...] closing of one chapter and opening of another [...] and the chapter that was just closing, the idea of people gifting through altruism or just a gift that there was no expectation of reciprocity was quite alien to me, so this was really quite...so this felt kind of quite bizarre at the time, that someone's just going to give me their T-shirt. (Tom, 2018)

The gift of the T-shirt served as a marker of how Tom's social world had changed and signalled that he had left one style of life and entered a new one.

Morgan's scarf was a leaving gift when she moved from New York to London. She described her sense of trepidation and not knowing what she was doing when she recalled both moving to New York and when she left to move to London. When she moved to New York it was the people she described as her 'fancy friends' who eased that transition and, on moving to London, it was the scarf gifted by these friends that had a similar effect on her.

George's Helmut Lang jacket is linked to George's memory of 'coming out' as gay to his parents. Describing his mother's friend who gave him the jacket, George said:

He was a gay guy and I'd just come out and my Mum wasn't dealing with it great, she was, she was being great but she was finding it difficult, and erm, you know, he was like, look, here's some cool clothes. (George, 2018)

George remembers the gift of clothing as an act of kindness when he and his family were going through a difficult time. A person who was comfortable in a gay lifestyle made the gift at a significant time in George's life. Although there were other items that this friend had given him, George treasured this garment because it 'grew on him'. Part of the reason that George kept this jacket was because of the designer label. He knew it was an expensive fashion item, "I looked up Helmut Lang and I was like, 'Oh, this is a fancy jacket'" (George, 2018). George did not wear the jacket in his hometown: "I kept it, but I never really wore it, and it was only when I got to London that I was like, actually this is quite cool" (George, 2018). George described getting to London to go to university and how different the fashions and styles were from his native Buckingham where his contemporaries dressed in 'tropes' (Goth, Skater or Townie, etc.). In London he felt he was free to create a more individual 'George' style, a style informed by being an art student and the London club scene. Describing the moment he realized the jacket was treasured he said:

And then I didn't know how to wear it and then I used to wear it and it always used to look stupid, and then I remember going out one day with my friend [...] and then I like put this on with a really ripped up pair of jeans and some big cowboy boots and I was like 'Oh! There you are.' (George, 2018).

Learning how to fit the jacket into his personal style was an important moment for George; part of becoming his adult self. There are two periods of transition here for George, being given the jacket at a time when he was coming out as a teenager, and then discovering how to wear the jacket as a young man living in London.

Abbie's treasured garment, her T-shirt, was also instrumental in the development of her personal style once she left home to go to art school.

I probably had a very plain style like all throughout school and stuff I just wore the same thing as everyone else, then I think when I started actually thinking about what I was wearing and be...being more interested in my image then I remembered that my Mum had this T-shirt (Abbie, 2018).

The life transition Abbie's garment marks is moving out of the family home to live on her own for the first time and, like George, moving between teenager and young adult.

The remaining participants supplied related stories; Zoe's handbag and Ali's vest were bound up with moving from a dependent to independent relationship with parents and with leaving home, while Phoebe's dress marked a shift from single to partnered state. These garment stories share in common the close link to narratives of life transition. In each case, the acquisition of the material garment was associated with the beginning of a new life pathway, and the garment is then taken with the participant into their new phase of life. In some cases, the transition was not just of life stage but of personal style as well.

### 8.2.1 Life Transitions Discussion

This evidence suggests that a common route for treasuring begins with acquisition at a time of life change, with the garment accompanying the wearer through this time of uncertainty. For my participants, the garments represented both the lives they were leaving behind and what their lives were about to become, providing a thread of continuity from one stage of life to the next.

Banim and Guy (2000) observed how women used clothes to help deal with life changes such as weight gain, middle age and having children. They found women were active in changing how they dressed to suit their new body shape or age, also changing their approach to clothing and the types of clothing they purchased as they aged (Banim & Guy, 2000: 322). Their research focused on the wardrobe as a whole and how their participants' style evolved in relation to life events. In parallel, for treasured garments, this research found changes in personal style marked transitions, and also observed garments that accompanied individuals through life change provided a bridge between lifestyles for both genders.

Friese (2001) identified the wedding dress as a treasured garment in many women's wardrobes and argued that it assisted a woman's transition from one stage of life to the next. Using theories of ritual, the sacred and the profane, Friese charted the transition from single to married through wedding dresses. Van Gennep (1960 in Friese, 2001: 2) defined ritual processes as the way that a person is moved from one social status to another by a particular society. During this process, the individual passes from the profane to the sacred to the profane. Friese describes the sacred as "an extraordinary experience transcending everyday life," in contrast to the profane indicating "the familiar, the usual, the ordinary" (2001: 2). In Friese's example, marriage is identified as a ritual process; the bride moves from the profane realm of single women, into the sacred and liminal stage of bride-to-be, and finally, after the wedding ceremony, the bride enters the new profane realm of the married woman.



A wedding dress, as Frieze (2001) and Weber and Mitchell (2004) have pointed out, is a garment of ritual that is already on acquisition overflowing with cultural meaning. It is pre-destined to become a sacred object because of its function in the ritual rite of passage. The transition is not so dramatic in the study of treasured garments. Mark's coat was purchased for practical rather than ceremonial reasons. He was not aware at the time of the role his coat would play in marking his transition from one phase of life to the next and there was no personal or societal expectation of this transformation. A major difference between the transition of the bride and the transitions evidenced here is the absence of public ceremony. There are no clear, culturally defined processes associated with the transitions marked by the treasured garment stories. Nor is the public performance concentrated into one heightened period of time. However, despite these differences, parallels between Frieze's sacred-profane theorising of the wedding dress and treasured garments can be drawn. The liminal stage of the 'bride-to-be', when the wedding dress is selected, allowed experimentation with a new identity. In this study, Mark and George clearly pointed to a liminal time when with the aid of the now-treasured garment ("it kind of started with the buying of the coat"), they were able to imagine themselves in their new identity ("Oh, there you are").

The trip to Canada could be seen as the sacred, liminal stage between the two phases of Mark's life. He moves from the profane stage of his working life in London into the extraordinary adventure in Canada, and the item that helped him move between those stages was his coat. He described being very unprepared for his trip and knowing that he needed a warm coat. Like the bride, once he found his coat, he was better able to imagine himself making the trip to Canada. Mark returned to the profane realm (ordinary life in London), but with new plans to move to Canada for an extended period. This Canada, no longer in the sacred realm outside of everyday life of the first trip, is brought back to the profane by Mark's plan to work there for six months. Mark's coat is worn in both the sacred and profane realms. He does not keep the coat, unused, as a memento or reminder of his life-changing trip; he continues to wear it across both realms. Mark's coat can move between the realms of the sacred and profane in a way that a wedding dress cannot because of the

everyday nature of the garment. Treasured garments can be worn on both sides of a life transition and provide a sense of continuity for the wearer.

The treasured garment stories also share an element of ‘magical revelation’ characteristic of a sacred object (Belk et al., 1989: 6). Friese found “the right [wedding] dress almost seemed to magically reveal itself to the bride” (2001: 4). When Mark acquired his coat, it fell out from underneath another coat and he described a feeling that he just “had to have it” (Mark, 2018); he described finding his coat as fate. Describing the moment he figured out how to wear his Helmut Lang jacket, George iterated: “Like that bit in Peter Pan when they’re like ‘There you are Peter!’”.<sup>11</sup> The jacket magically revealed itself to him, and from then on he knew how to wear it and treasured it.

Although the changes described in the participants’ lives are not marked with ceremonial rituals, they were significant moments when they transitioned from one phase to another. Mark went from being in a relationship and in a steady job to single and freelance, Morgan moved from her home country to a new one, Tom left one style of life behind in pursuit of a new one, and George both came out as gay and moved away from home. Similar elements associated with sacred garments being performed were found with comparatively ordinary items of clothing such as T-shirts, scarves and coats. Even without the ritual and cultural expectations, the treasured garments still take on the role of the sacred companion from one life stage to another. The salient element is not the ritual and ceremonial, but the transition that the garment accompanied the participant through.

### **8.3 Connection to others, connection to self**

Many of the participants’ treasured garments previously belonged to their parents or were received as gifts. We have seen (see Section 5.3.7) the ability of gifts to

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<sup>11</sup> George refers to a scene in ‘Hook’ during which the lost boys fail to recognize Peter Pan (played by Robin Williams) as he has grown up. Upon looking closely into Peter’s eyes and stretching his face back, one of the boys remarks, ‘There you are Peter!’, as if Peter Pan magically revealed himself to them.

embody the relationship between giver and receiver in accord with the anthropological literature. This section further explores how treasured garments provide a sense of connection and continuity in family identities, with the garment part of both individual and the familial stories.

Ali saw his vest capturing the dual nature of his identity, reminding him of his family story:

Mum was Russian, so I can put it on, and be like here's some of my Russian-ness and some of my English alien in Russia [...] it's all part of that story of er, being slightly other in a different country. And part of my identity as that's my family story, so it kind of fits in with that and has always been treasured (Ali, 2018).

Ali can put on not only the vest but also the different identities it represents through memories of his father, of growing up and of his whole family together in Russia. His father was one of the founders of the Moscow Hash House Harriers running club that still exists today. The vest carries a sense of belonging to that ex-patriot community in Moscow. It represents and brings together the two nationalities of his family.



Figure 8.3: Close up of Ali's Running Vest

Ali said he would feel conspicuous using the vest for its intended use, because of the political nature of the design. Instead, Ali has found a way to wear it that fits in with his London life and allows him to feel comfortable; it has changed to party wear: "It's a going out T-shirt, it's a going out, having a good time T-shirt definitely [...] I'd actually feel quite self conscious wearing this [running] round [the] park" (Ali, 2018). Wearing it to parties in London has connected the vest to his personal biography. The vest combines family, Moscow, London, all symbolically connected in one garment.

This sense of familial identity is also present in Abbie's treasured garment. Her T-shirt brings together her life as a student in London, her parents' life as international travellers, and her grandmother's life in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, giving a sense of continuity to her own narrative. It brings to mind her grandmother, her mother and her girlhood. The T-shirt existed in her memory before she possessed it, when she remembered her mother wearing it but did not know if it still existed. Now, she has

adding to those existing meanings by wearing it for university. For her friends, the garment is associated very much with Abbie and her personal style.

Such garments bring together different threads of identity. The children wear the same garment as their parents did but in different ways, times, contexts and places. Ali wears his father's running vest to parties, Abbie wears the T-shirt from New Zealand in London, Phoebe wears her mother's skirt to Notting Hill Carnival, and George wears a business shirt for painting. They are incorporating the items their parents once wore into their own styles and identities, making the items their own through wear, but retaining a link back to the parental wearer and familial identity.

The treasured garments discussed in this section were acquired when the participants were in their late teens or early twenties; therefore these items could represent trying on a new adult identity while having a reminder of the home they had so recently left. Abbie linked the acquisition of her T-shirt with finding her personal style, while Phoebe commented that she shared a love for bright colours with her mother. The items become representative of a shared familial identity and a distinct personal identity. The ownership of the garment moves from parent to child, although, the lines of ownership are sometimes blurred (see Section 5.3.7). By wearing the same items as their parents, the children are adding to the garment's meanings and making their claim as narrators of a family history, further positioning their treasured garments as future family heirlooms.

Botticello (2014: 114) asserted that "Fashion is about creating personal value – as authentic selves – materialized through old clothing," highlighting that what was important to her participants was the ability to make the second hand clothing part of their own wardrobe and individual style, integrating it into their own biography. She noted that when individuals purchase second hand clothing, the new owners supplant the old meanings of the garment with their own, in order to better integrate it into their own biography (Botticello, 2014). In the current study, the old meanings are retained. The descendants claim their clothing inheritance because they wish to retain the meanings the clothing held for their parents as well as adding

their own meanings. The participants in this study were still faced with the task of finding a way to fit the garment into their sense of style and integrate into their own biography. But new ways and new meanings are additional so the garment becomes both part of their own identity and part of the family identity.

Clothing is given as an example of one of the types of possessions that can be brought into the extended self and defined as a 'second skin' (Belk, 1988: 151). Belk's (1988) research on the self describes the way in which possessions come to be thought of as part of the self. He believes that as well as the 'core self' — our body and minds — we incorporate outside elements into what he calls our 'extended self'. The extended self is conceptualized as layers or rings radiating out from the core, with possessions immediately following that core in their centrality to self (Belk, 1988: 160). Belk posits that there are a number of ways that objects can become part of the extended self: "Self-extension occurs through control and mastery of an object, through creation of an object, through knowledge of an object, and through contamination via proximity and habituation to an object" (1988: 160). Western culture tends to see consuming objects and relying on them for a sense of self in a negative light, but Belk (1988: 160) argues that "the construct of extended self also suggests that possessions can make a positive contribution to our identities" helping to create meaning in individuals' lives. Belk explains that people seek to extend the self by owning certain objects that "retain a part of the extended self of valued others." (1988: 149), for example, gifts received from loved ones. In this study, the treasuring of clothing that was obtained from family members can be viewed in terms of Belk's extended self — incorporating something that retains part of the valued other's self, enabling the garment to be simultaneously part of the self and a connection to a loved one.

Ahuvia (2005: 128) extends Belk's work on the extended self to show how people use objects they love as a "synthesizing solution", to resolve identity conflicts; in other words, the loved object allows them to bring together two seemingly opposed pieces of themselves. This research has found that treasured garments, and also loved garments (see Section 4.4), do not so much resolve identity conflicts as allow

participants to simultaneously express multiple sides of themselves and provide continuity in potentially fragmented identities. They are unifying garments in that they bring together what could be seen as disparate aspects of the life narrative. This is an important counter to the Fashion Studies' usual view of "consumption as a method of demarcating social groups" (Ahuvia, 2005: 181), where work has been focused on using clothing to show membership of different social groups and the external expression of identity. Looking at identity as inwardly constructed via an understanding of the self through clothing provides an alternative way of examining clothing and identity that better aligns with the evidence of this study.

### **8.3.1 Treasured Garments and Personal Style**

Due to the close relationship between fashion and identity, one of the early hypotheses of this research was that the treasured item of clothing might be closely aligned with the individual's personal style. It was expected that treasured garments would have a strong relationship to personal style; it would be an item that they thought of as 'this is me'.

Mark said that his coat was the item that his housemates most associate with him, and Abbie commented that her university friends would associate her with her T-shirt, describing it as her 'signature look'. George wears his jacket at least two to three times per week. These participants said that their treasured garment was in line with their personal style and reflected who they were. For George, the moment he realized how to wear his jacket could also be seen as the moment he felt comfortable in his new identity as a out gay man in London versus a closeted teenager in the countryside. Mark, George and Abbie have incorporated their treasured garments into their identities and extended selves wearing them regularly, their garments are synonymous with their personal style and how they present themselves to the world.

By contrast, Zoe's bag did not look like anything else in her wardrobe. From the researcher's point of view, it did not seem to fit her usual style. The bag was not for

everyday use, but reserved for evenings and dressing up, what Zoe referred to as being 'ladylike'. However, Zoe commented that, "I just love it, and, it's like really...ugly, but really cute, and that's like, just my fashion sense all over I feel" (Zoe, 2018). Even though it was not visually apparent, the treasured garment had elements of what Zoe defined as her fashion sense.

There also instances in which treasured garments were related strongly to the self, in terms of who the participants felt they were, but not to their personal sense of style. Ali's vest is not his usual style, he described wearing a lot of dark, neutral colours like burgundy, navy, grey because, as he puts it, "I've got like dark hair and blue eyes and I'm quite pale, I'm quite like, kind of 'winter' palette" (Ali, 2018). The vest is the opposite, a 'summer palette' of bright yellow and red.

Likewise, Morgan and Tom said their garments were different to their usual style. Morgan described frequently wearing black and said she would never have chosen that scarf for herself. Tom said that although he liked the T-shirt, it wasn't his usual style and was too large for him. Nevertheless, both of them found a way to continue to wear these items. They are reserved for a special function: travelling. The garments themselves also suggest travel; Tom's T-shirt carries an image of Tin Tin on a ferry boat, and Tin Tin is associated with global travel,<sup>12</sup> while the brand of Morgan's scarf 'Calypso St Barthes' was marketed as a travel brand. The relative anonymity of travelling, coupled with a relaxed dress code gives people an opportunity to wear clothes to travel they would not wear in their day-to-day life.

This study found that treasured garment were not always garments that most represented the individuals' personal style. Garments that do not fit in with the participants' conception of their personal style were utilized and worn by finding particular roles or occasions for those items (dressing up, partying, travelling). The garment still embodies a part of them, their identity and biography despite not

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<sup>12</sup> In the Tin Tin of comics for children by Hergé, the main character Tintin travels the world solving mysteries and fighting crime with his dog and sidekick, Snowy.



fitting their usual way of presenting themselves to the world. As these examples highlight, treasured garments allow diverse aspects of identity to co-exist, the participants make space for these items in their lives and their wardrobes.

### **8.3.2 Concealing and Revealing the Body and the Self**

Phoebe recognised the power of fashion and style in the perceived signification of identity. When asked if her treasured garment fitted her personal style, she questioned the concept of both personal style and a stable self.

I find that quite difficult, like, the concept of that [personal style] [...] I think that, that is interesting that I just like, as soon as it becomes about identity or like, you asserting something about 'yourself' [makes inverted commas with fingers] through your choices, I find it really like... 'Ooooh, I don't know like... I'm not making any... I don't wanna many any... um, like assertions about that, [...] the idea of a solid self, [...] I find quite difficult (Phoebe, 2018).

She went on to describe how she feels that asserting the self, or making a statement about the self through dress makes her feel 'vulnerable' and reasons "that's probably why I've been... yeah, going more towards like, ah just keep it black and grey and like, don't have to show everything all the time" (Phoebe, 2018). So while Phoebe repeatedly stated in the interview that she likes bright colours and bold prints, she has begun to wear neutral colours in an attempt to keep something back, to not feel 'on show'.

Much of Phoebe's interview discussed revealing and concealing both the body and her internal self. Her most treasured garment, her floral skirt (see Figure 8.5), she liked because:

It's this thing of like being on display, like it's fun and it has, kind of, colours, and it's like, expressive but it's also like covering and it's not my body that is on show, it's this kind of big thing around it (Phoebe, 2018).

She enjoys wearing her treasured garment is because she can feel 'on show' but also covered up; it is not her body that is emphasized, but the skirt, its pattern and fabric.

Similarly her reticence to wear her other treasured garment, the stripy dress is because she feels like her body is 'on show' in that garment due to the tighter fit: "it's quite on show, it like, clings to my bum [laughs]" (Phoebe, 2018). In contrast to the floral skirt, the stripy dress (see Figure 8.6) makes her body conscious, and requires a different mindset to wear. Phoebe feels 'on show' in both garments, but the skirt references her personality, while the stripy dress references her body; and she is reluctant to manifest either sense of 'on show' all of the time. She eschews people making assumptions about her based on her clothing, demonstrating control over constructing her image, deciding when, what, and how much she wants to be 'on show'.



Figure 8.4: Phoebe's Floral Skirt



Figure 8.5: Phoebe's Stripy Dress

### 8.3.3 'Me and Not Me' Discussion

The link between treasured garments and personal style and Phoebe's desire to reveal and conceal and can be understood in terms of fashion and clothing being thought of as both 'me and not me'. Clothing has been said to occupy the space between what is 'me' and 'not me' (Kaiser, 2001; Woodward, 2007; Sampson, 2017). Tseïlon (2010) describes clothing as something that "negotiates the relationship

between self and other” (151). This relationship is linked to early developmental experience. Winnicott’s (1953) widely-acknowledged theory of ‘transitional objects’ holds that infants become attached to a particular object, usually a cuddly or blanket, which is conceptualized as both part of and separate from the self, and which substitutes for the nurturer. Children and adults return to textiles and clothing later in life for related feelings of security. We can see echoes of these first ‘transitional objects’ in comforting treasured garments. Morgan’s scarf acts as a reassuring presence in the absence of the nurturing friends she has left behind in New York. We might extend this to the participants who treasure garments that used to belong to a parent, although the degree of comfort of the parental presence is different once the child is an adult.

Drawing upon Winnicott, Sampson (2017) argues the garment mediates

the relationship between the wearer’s internal imagined self and the projected bodily reality presented to the world. The garment is transitional in the sense that it is the site on which a shift from internal desire to external performance is achieved and maintained (Sampson, 2017: 345-46).

The act of getting dressed is an act of managing the internal understanding of the self and the external perceptions of it (Skjold, 2016; Cwerner, 2001; Woodward, 2007). Viewed in this way, the garments are not only transitional in the sense of the movement from one stage of life to the next, but in the differentiation and interplay between self and other, the internal and the external life.

Kaiser (2001) is suspicious of the idea of a stable self, contending that there is no ‘essence’ or ‘true self’ that is hidden under appearances, and also rejects the contrasting view that someone’s character can be ‘read’ from his or her appearance (2001: 80). The strategy Kaiser suggests for negotiating the boundaries of public and private self, outfit construction and internal understanding is one of ‘minding appearances’. Kaiser claims:

Appearance style becomes a working model or a tentative truth claim about identity (i.e. who I am, who I am not, who I may be becoming). The process of minding appearance enables the construction of looks, as well as tentative understandings about the self in relation to others (Kaiser, 2001: 80).

This conception of identity is contingent and in the process of becoming, it seeks not to fix meanings of clothing and self but instead to allow space for the ambiguity of experiences, meanings and understanding that clothing can generate. Phoebe is resistant to the meanings of her clothing being either fixed or 'read' by others, and in her treasured garments we can sense working or tentative truth claims about her identity.

The various understandings of 'me and not me' relating to fashion practice can be read as 'my style or not my style', 'my biography or not my biography', 'my physical self and not my physical self'. When someone says 'this is me' they could mean one or all of those things. The tension between treasured garments as both 'me and not me' can be seen in the garments that do not represent personal style. Treasured garments reveal that a garment can be important in the conception of the self but not a part of the self that the wearer would ordinarily project.

#### **8.4 Wardrobe, Biography, Narrative and the Self**

The act of wearing their treasured garment became a prompt for some participants to tell their story: 'it's a conversation piece I suppose, I can say well you know, I used to live in Moscow' (Ali, 2018). Abbie and Phoebe described the enjoyment of telling the family story and acquisition stories of their garments. These have bright, unusual designs that generate compliments and lead to conversations with strangers. Mark mentioned his friends get frustrated with him when he 'goes on' about his coat and the story behind it.

The narratives of participants' treasured garments and their life transitions have been constructed retrospectively, in reflection on the events. In considering why their garment is special, each participant told a story about their life and how

wearing a garment fitted into this. Tseëlon (2010) compares the construction of identity to a narrative or story, not in the sense of fiction but in the “creative treatment of actuality” (152). She argues that identity has been criticized for not accommodating contested or reflexive aspects and for being too static. Tseëlon (2010: 152) traces how the conception of identity has moved from fixed to emergent, contingent and ambivalent.

There were multiple narratives constructed during the interviews: narratives of acquisition; narratives of wearing; narratives of keeping; and imagined future narratives for the garments. Ahuvia argues that “narrative theory, in which our sense of identity is structured as a story, has emerged as the dominant conceptualization of the self [...] stories [that] are usually structured around conflicts and their eventual resolution” (2005: 181). Summarizing the work of Anthony Giddens, Gauntlett writes:

Self-identity becomes a reflexive project – an endeavour that we continuously work and reflect on. We create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narratives – the story of who we are, and how we came to be where we are now (Gauntlett, 2002: 78).

Unlike conceptions of identity that define people by age, gender, occupation, Giddens argues that “self identity is not a set of traits or observable characteristics. It is a person's own reflexive understanding of their biography” (Giddens in Gauntlett, 2002: 78). Giddens’ narrative conception of the self supports the idea that treasured garments aid the construction of biographical narratives about the self. Instead of the self being viewed as something that can be communicated, it is viewed as a biography, and treasured garments are used by participants to understand and construct that biography.

## **8.5 Summary**

This chapter has used literature from wardrobe studies, theories of fashion and identity and consumption studies to analyse the evidence discovered on the role of treasured garments in relation to conceptions of the self. The timing of acquisition and wearing was seen as significant for many of the participants with life transitions

being a dominant theme. The garments appear to be able to provide continuity and reassurance during times of change. Treasured garments can even be conceptualized as 'transitional garments' extending both the work of Frieze and Winnicott's theory of the first transitional object to adults and the process of treasuring garments.

The participants who treasured garments that were previously owned by their parents made their claim as narrators of a familial story by requesting and wearing those items. These garments retained the meanings associated with the parent and were added to by the children who wore them in a different way. The garment is both a link back to the family identity and the parents, and a statement of their own individual self. These two distinct strands of identity were held in the same garment. Rather than resolving conflicts in identity as suggested by Ahuvia (2005), treasured garments allow those differences to co-exist.

Treasured garments could mark not only a transition in life stage but a transition in personal style. Treasured garments highlighted the tension in the 'me and not me' of clothing. They could be 'me' in terms of personal histories, but 'not me' in terms of personal style, they could show off one part of 'me' (style) whilst hiding another (the body). The wearing of treasured garments seemed to be less about communicating an identity outwards, as part of a style tribe or trend, and more about constructing a biography inwardly by wearing a garment with meaning. These items of clothing were able to aid in creating and maintaining biographical narratives as well as allowing participants to verbally tell their story if asked about the garment.

Phoebe's reticence to recognize a stable self and her concern about her clothes unintentionally communicating things about herself was understood using Kaiser's concept of 'minding appearances', seeing identity construction as a process of becoming and making tentative truth claims. This allows space for ambiguity, just as treasured garments allow space for different elements of identity to be simultaneously present in the same item.

## 9. Value

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter explores issues of value in relation to the process of treasuring, examining the evidence in the light of theories of value. In the literature, theoretical perspectives govern what is meant by the word value. For example, Appadurai (1986) argued that value is created by exchange, whereas Richins (1994b) rejected economic value for its inability to capture the actual value for consumers, claiming instead that value is created through meaning. Value has been widely described in both economic and non-economic terms, summarised in Table 9.1.<sup>13</sup> This chapter discusses these various registers of value in relation to treasured garments, considering first the impact of economic value, and then non-economic forms of value starting with use value and the impact of wearing, followed by sentimental value. This leads to a discussion of uniqueness, irreplaceability and singularization. With reference to transcendental value, an analysis of the treasured garment's ability to connect past, present and future is undertaken. Finally, reasons for treasuring garments are proposed in terms of value and valuing.

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<sup>13</sup> A discussion of these types of value is undertaken in the literature review.

**Table 9.1: Registers of Value and Definitions Identified in the Literature**

	<i>Type of Value</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<b>Economic Value (Money and Exchange)</b>	<b>Exchange Value</b> (Marx, [1867] 1990; Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, (1986)	How much money the item can be exchanged for
	<b>Investment Value</b> (Bye & McKinney, 2007)	The amount spent on the item by the owner
<b>Includes elements of economic and non-economic value</b>	<b>Public Meaning [Value]</b> (Ritchens, 1994b)	The publicly agreed meanings of an object, including, but not limited to, price
	<b>Labour Value</b> (Marx, [1867] 1990)	The human work that went into making something
<b>Non-economic Value</b>	<b>Use or Utilitarian Value</b> (Marx, [1867] 1990; Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986)	How useful the object is (not necessarily its intended use)
	<b>Sentimental Value</b> (Bye & McKinney, 2007; Banim & Guy, 2001)	Personal feelings about the item relating to memories, loved ones or events
	<b>Hedonic Value</b> (Khan, Dhar, & Wertenbroch, 2005)	The amount of pleasure derived from an item
	<b>Aesthetic Value</b> (Bye & McKinney, 2007)	The beauty or visual appeal of the object
	<b>Personal Value</b> (Identity) (Botticello, 2015)	Ability to represent personality or self
	<b>Private Meaning (Value)</b> (Ritchens, 1994b)	The personal associations and meanings of the object (often linked to sentimental value)
	<b>Age Value</b> (Woodward, 2007)	This applies to an object in possession a long time, or which represents a particular period
	<b>Transcendental Value</b> (Weiner, 1984)	Symbolic properties contributing to and derived from inalienability



## 9.2 Economic Value

Even though they received their garments as gifts, George and Morgan were aware of their monetary value, and this affected their perception of them. They would not have purchased the garments for themselves due to the price. Morgan knew her cashmere scarf cost around \$100 and described it as ‘fancy’. George used the same word, ‘fancy’, to describe his Helmut Lang jacket. He had seen the jacket for sale on a second hand website for \$202 (see Figure 9.1), confirming his supposition that it was an expensive item. The designer name and the presumed market value was also a reason for keeping the item when he did not wear it, but he was keen to point out that neither designer nor economic value was why he treasured it. Mark noted the contrast between the amount he paid for his second hand coat (£90) and how much it would have cost new (over £800), a price he could not have afforded. He also felt that the coat was now worth more than he paid for it. George and Mark both saw their garments as more costly than other items in their wardrobes.

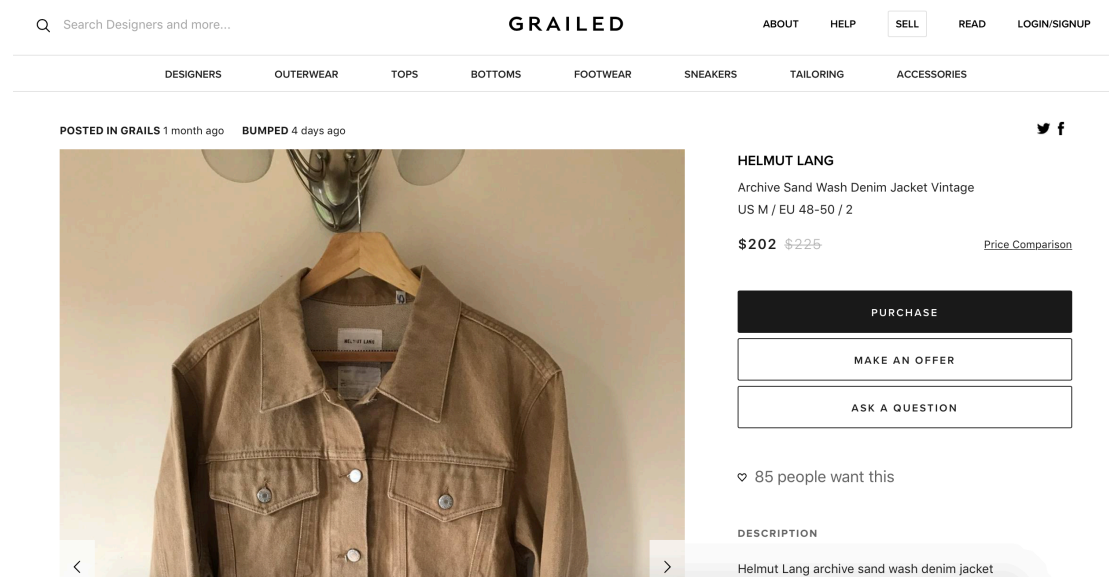


Figure 9.1: A version of George’s Jacket for sale on a second hand site. (Grailed: Online).

The above price equivalents are distinct to the investment value described by Bye and McKinney (2007), whose participants did not want to part with an item because it had cost a lot of money, feeling they had not worn the garment enough to justify the amount spent. The element of investment value surfaced in respect of Ali’s suit

and Bart's leather jacket, which were the most expensive treasured garments in the study (£200 and £390 respectively). Ali linked money spent to length of use: "I spent the money on it [...] I want the longevity of its use" (Ali, 2018). Bart didn't perceive his jacket as expensive: "two, three hundred pounds for a leather jacket is not too much" (Bart, 2018). However, as revealed in Section 5.6, he had spent thousands of pounds on other leather jackets that did not fit, meaning the financial investment required to arrive at that leather jacket was greater than its individual cost.

For these items, the suit and the jacket, the owners expressed no strong emotional attachment. Both men had other treasured garments to which they were emotionally attached; the gift scarf received from Bart's father, and the family vest acquired by Ali were items that were emotive or loved. While they had both formed emotional attachments to other items of clothing, the suit and the jacket appear valued for a different reason, as practical garments that had cost a lot of money and represented wise purchases demonstrating their clothing competence.

The fashion press refer to suits and leather jackets and as "Timeless, investment-worthy" (Lindley, 2013) and items that can be worn for years. In Bart and Ali's case, we can see that the investment was not only monetary. There was also an investment of time and energy into their acquisition and care. Both men had them altered and stored them in a particular way. 'Investment value' may conceal here a non-economic element, what Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) call 'psychic energy' due to the effort, time, and attention directed towards special objects. This expanded view of investment, which incorporates both psychic and financial expenditure appears to underlie Bart and Ali's treasuring. Viewed in this way, price alone may be an inadequate measure of investment value and the term could be reconsidered to include both of types of investment.

### **9.3 Use Value**

The garment that performs well is more likely to be treasured. Clothing that fitted well, felt comfortable and maintained the well-being of the wearer was held dear.

Such use value is often tied to material aspects of a garment; for example, if a garment is damaged or no longer fits, it is less likely to be worn. However, wearing cannot be simply equated with utility (in the Marxian sense of satisfying needs and desires through material properties). There is a broader range of utility that is determined by the owner.

Some treasured garments were seen as dependable items that could be worn on a variety of occasions and easily matched with other items in the wardrobe. These garments parallel those of Banim and Guy's (2000) category of 'favourite' clothing—easy to care for and easy to combine. Kaiser (2001) used the term 'contextual flexibility' to describe favourite clothing's ability to be worn in a range of situations. In some cases, the stimulus for treasuring appears to be the flexible, dependable qualities of garments judged as favourites (Bart's leather jacket and Abbie's T-Shirt for example). However, other garments had been assigned a specific role (travelling, work, partying or special occasions); they were contextually inflexible, yet still treasured. This highlights the crossover in terms 'favourite' and 'treasured', showing that favourite garments can also be treasured garments, but, that not all favourite garments are treasured, and that garments can be treasured without being favourites. In use, treasured garments were considered reliable for the context in which they were worn, the owner was confident that item would work.

The uses mentioned so far are linked by wearability. However, treasured garments can be valued in uses apart from wear. Bart's scarf that has never been worn helps him to remember his father, while his no longer worn hat holds memories of going out clubbing. In addition, garments that are infrequently worn can have uses during rest. Zoe's handbag is displayed on her wall as 'a piece of art' and when Morgan sees her scarf in the drawer, it elicits agreeable reflections:

Every time I open my drawer and see it in there, even though, like I said, I don't wear it very often but that sense of just going like, [sighs] that was like, that was a good, that was a good choice I made. (Morgan, 2018)

Treasured garments bring to mind the alternative purposes served by clothing while, as all clothes do, spending the greater part of their lives not being worn.

#### 9.4 Worn and Unworn

So commonly is use of clothing equated with wearing that wardrobe studies have emphasized the importance of clothing that is no longer worn (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007; Masuch & Hefferon, 2018), the inference being that if an item is no longer worn, it is no longer useful, therefore it is strange that it should be retained. The reasons previously found for retaining unworn clothes range from sentimental value and support for identity (Banim & Guy, 2001; Woodward, 2007; Masuch & Hefferon, 2018) to more practical considerations such as it may fit again one day (Bye & McKinney, 2007), it might be useful (Hertz, 2011), it was forgotten (Cluver, 2008) or it was awaiting divestment (Cluver, 2008). Therefore, the classification of worn or unworn as such does not indicate that the garment is more or less valuable to the owner.

By focusing predominantly on the personal meanings of unworn clothing an opportunity has been missed to investigate the emotional connections and resonances to currently worn clothing. Masuch and Hefferon (2018) noted this, commenting that their findings had revealed “the psychological significance of another category of dress memorabilia [...] those that are still or occasionally worn” were kept for sentimental reasons (357).<sup>14</sup> As shown in Table 9.2, many of the treasured garments in this study were still actively worn, as everyday items or for a specific purpose. The previous chapters have detailed the meanings, emotional resonances and connections of clothing that is both treasured and worn regularly. Only four of twenty-two garments discussed by participants were no longer worn. Admittedly, the age range of participants and their current life stage may have skewed these results somewhat; perhaps a sample with older people would have revealed more no longer worn treasured garments. However, the finding appears indicative for the Millennial generational cohort.

Of the four items not worn, Phoebe’s skirt was no longer worn due to the elastic breaking at the waist, however, as she planned to repair and to continue wearing it,

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<sup>14</sup> Fleetwood Smith et al. (2019) began to address this gap by examining individuals’ experiences with attachment clothing that was currently worn.

it was only temporarily inactive. Bart also discussed items no longer worn: his 70s shirt which he no longer possessed, and a Ted Baker hat worn with the shirt as an outfit, both of which evoked memories of his clubbing days. His stripy scarf, a gift from his father, had never been worn.

Masuch and Hefferon (2018) noted a difference between the meanings of no longer worn clothing and occasionally worn clothing in their study, calling both of these 'dress memorabilia' and contrasting them with actively worn clothing. Their study did not reveal any regularly worn attachment clothing. They found that no longer worn clothing was framed positively and used to reminisce about past selves. This echoes what was found here in relation to Bart's no longer worn treasured garments. The scarf that acted as a memento of his father was a relatively straightforward reason for keeping the garment. Unlike the scarf, the hat had additional layers of meaning from being worn, prompting reminiscence. The hat is by Ted Baker, a brand which Bart identified as one of his favourites and part of an outfit he was proud of: "army boots, those really nice tight, 'baklar' jeans, 70s proper polyester vintage [shirt], and this [the hat], and...I love that look" (Bart, 2018). This outfit represented a departure in how he usually felt about clothing, Bart mentioned that he is not trendy and 'not very courageous' with clothing choices. However in this outfit, he felt different, "I just feel really like [nods head, makes impressed face] cool kid [laughs]" (Bart, 2018). Bart wore that outfit to go out clubbing, an activity since swapped for the gym. He talked about the club scene in London and how much he missed it, describing the 'good old days' and commenting, "The clubs are not the same [now], that's the thing" (Bart, 2018). The hat, and the outfit that went with it were part of his clubbing style and remind him of those past good times when he was a 'cool kid'.

So far as Bart's hat goes, this is consistent with Masuch and Hefferon's findings that "retained clothes were predominantly associated with happy memories of carefree stages of life" yet tinged with nostalgia for that past (2018: 352). However the discarded 70s shirt and jeans are involved in the same memories as part of an outfit. Bart does not appear to miss the jeans, perhaps because, as he mentioned, they would no longer fit him. He deeply regrets divesting of the shirt; it was the item Bart

described as his most treasured garment and different from his other clothes. Bart's shirt is still valued highly even though it is no longer owned. It is often implied that discarded clothing is no longer useful or valuable to a person; Bart's case draws attention to the need to include absent garments in the system of personal value.

Masuch and Hefferon contrasted unworn clothing with clothing that was occasionally worn, arguing that the meanings of these clothes had more emotional complexity, and represented "deeper reflections about existential givens like the general transience of life stages" (Masuch & Hefferon, 2018: 355). However, they did not extend this to actively worn clothing. As discussed in Section 8.2, many of the actively worn garments were treasured due their companionship during just such life transitions. Treasured garments were used to navigate changing circumstances and conceptions of self, experiences that were reflected on when the garments were worn in the present. Fleetwood Smith et al. (2019: 56) found "actively worn attachment clothing linked to positive experiences and memories", placing worn within the same context as Masuch and Hefferon's unworn. An important difference framing the meaning of worn garments was pointed out by Woodward: "a garment that is worn in the present can never be relegated to the past" (2007: 66). Garments that are still worn present opportunities to add new meanings layered on to the past. This was clearly highlighted in the garments acquired by participants from their parents, which acquired new meanings related to their own identity, while still retaining their connection to the family.

**Table 9.2: Frequency of wear in treasured garments**

Name	Garment	Frequency of Wear	Where/ When is it worn?
Mark	Woolrich Artic Parka	Worn Regularly	Everyday wear
Zoe	Beaded Bag	Worn Semi-Regularly	Special occasions and family events
Morgan	Pink Cashmere Scarf	Worn Semi-Regularly	Exclusively for air travel
Tom	Tintin T-shirt	Worn Semi-Regularly	Exclusively for travelling
Abbie	Hawkes Bay T-shirt	Worn Regularly	University, everyday, casual
Phoebe	Long printed skirt	Not Presently Worn (due to needed repair)	Parties and events.
	Stripy Dress	Worn Rarely	Work and on first date with partner
George	Helmut Lang Jacket	Worn Regularly	Everyday wear
	Scenic Art Shirt	Worn Regularly	Work
	Indian Skirt	Worn Semi-Regularly	Nights out and festivals
Ali	Yellow Moscow Vest	Worn Rarely	Parties and nights out
	Suit	Worn Semi-Regularly	Work and formal events
	Self Tie Bow Tie	Worn Semi-Regularly	Exclusively for work
Rhuza	Animal Print Silk Shirt	Worn Regularly	Work, events, casual and smart
	Katherine Hamnett T-Shirt	Worn Regularly	Casual
	Charity T-Shirt	Worn Rarely	Casual
	Cycling Leggings	Worn Regularly	Cycling and casual events
Bart	70s Shirt	No longer owns	Nights out
	Ted Baker Leather Jacket	Worn Regularly	Everyday, variety of occasions
	Ted Baker Hat	Will not Wear Again	Previously for nights out
	Scarf	Never worn	Never worn
	Red Military Jumper	Worn Semi-Regularly	Smart casual

\*Most treasured garment denoted by red font

The relationship between wear and meaning generation manifests in participants feeling more attached the longer they owned and wore certain garments. Items that have never been worn, such as Bart's scarf, are less complex, as they retain their original associations and are used primarily as mementos. Items that have been worn but are no longer worn are more strongly connected to the past and used in reminiscence. Items that are currently worn, either occasionally or often, have the ability to connect past and present, and even to project into the future feelings of security or confidence. Unlike Masuch and Hefferon's findings, the distinction between occasional wear and active wear did not seem to affect the nature or complexity of meaning in this sample.

### **9.5 Sentimental Value**

Positive memories are a common theme presented by the literature pertaining to treasured garments, and is often referred to as their sentimental value. Belk (1988) states that we are "likely to treasure most those possessions associated with pleasant memories" (149). Banim and Guy (2000) also linked favourite clothing with positive memories. While it is true that most of the actively worn items in this study reflected a positive framing of self, life events and connection to loved ones, memories were not uniformly positive: Phoebe's stripy dress could make her feel less body confident; George's shirt reminded him of a difficult relationship with his father; Mark's coat was purchased in the wake of a break up. The description 'sentimental value' is not sufficient to describe the tangle of physical and emotional relationships that individuals have to these items of clothing. Masuch and Hefferon (2018) noticed that occasionally worn items were "not thoroughly imbued with positively framed identity narratives" as the no longer worn garments were, and that worn items "bore witness to more complex self-relevant narratives containing bittersweet overtones" (357). They described this as 'dress nostalgia'. But while avoiding the negative connotations of sentimentality, they invoke another set of negative connotations in nostalgia, which is seen as wistful and melancholic.



The identity narratives in this study included times of change for the participants. These were often of difficult and challenging times and, in the case of George and his father, relationships. The research on treasured garments has shown complex narratives for items that are both occasionally and actively worn. However, as these items are worn in the present and allow the participants to imagine the future, 'nostalgia' is not appropriate to capture this experience of treasured garments.

Price et al. (2000) also argued against the use of 'sentimental value' finding that:

special possessions were not merely sentimental objects but unique meaning bundles that allowed them to tell their life stories, using narrative to create a durable sense of identity (Price et al., 2000: 187).

This was echoed in the current research, except, as the participants were younger, it was less about telling their life stories than aiding them to construct a life narrative. Treasured garments are material companions through life stages, they are valued not only for sentimental or nostalgic reasons, but for material reasons as well. In investigating both how and why individuals treasure garments, the relationship between person and garment has been highlighted as one of considerable complexity.

## **9.6 Uniqueness, Replaceability, Singularization**

Participant understandings of the uniqueness of their selected garments, along with how far they thought these were replaceable, informed their process of treasuring and the value that they ascribed to the garment. This section discusses the various ways in which garments come to be thought of as unique and how this relates to a garment being seen as irreplaceable. This discussion makes use of Igor Kopytoff's (1986) concept of singularization: the way that objects can be removed from the sphere of commodity exchange as a result of gifting, or through entering the realm of sacred or ritual value. Arjun Appadurai (1986) emphasized that commoditization and singularization are changeable positions over the use life of an object, a view that is also adopted here.

### 9.6.1 Uniqueness

Uniqueness is the degree to which something approximates to being unique or wholly singular. The uniqueness of a garment was a reason given by participants for treasuring. There were different ways in which the participants saw their garments as possessing uniqueness. This could be in the sense that they were rare, for example that few multiples had been originally produced. Some garments had become unique through deliberate alterations, whether for fit or decorative enhancement, for example Rhuza's added button, and Ali and Bart's altered to fit garments. In these cases, the owner made the garment unique through personalization. There was also uniqueness that came from accidental damage and wear, such as the stains on Bart's or George's shirt. These relate to the physical nature of the garment, but uniqueness can also be wound up with more subjective and personal factors that centre on ideas of replaceability and singularization. This section considers these in turn.

### 9.6.2 Rarity value

In three examples considered here, the participant believed the garment to be rare or difficult to obtain. For Abbie, finding out that there were a limited number of T-shirts like hers produced, enhanced its value to her. Asked when her item became thought of as treasured, she replied it was when she spoke to her grandmother (its original owner) and found out about its rarity:

I knew that I wouldn't be able to get another version of it, but I think knowing that there were only 100 made in the first place means that like, it probably is the last one left, [...] just knowing that it was a limited edition in the first place. (Abbie, 2018)

As Abbie explained, she had always thought of the T-shirt as special, but what made her think of it as treasured was knowing it was one of a limited number and the possibility she might have only surviving example. Ali had strong childhood memories of his parents and siblings wearing a variety of athletic shirts in the style of his treasured one: "growing up, all me and my siblings we had like, endless Moscow Hash House Harrier T-shirts" (Ali, 2018). Now he is left with only this one. Ali said

that this particular vest had been a favourite item throughout his life, and because it must be one of the few left, further made it special for Ali. For both Abbie and Ali, there is an added air of exclusivity as their garments were never available to the general public and are intimately tied to a family story in which the garments have travelled from distant places where they were acquired and worn by a relative.<sup>15</sup>

Zoe felt her bag to be from a limited edition: “it’s not a bag that anybody else has. [...] Cause, there were only six that were made, um, and my Mum’s got one of them, so there’s only four other people that have it” (Zoe, 2018). Object analysis conducted after the interview revealed the bag to be a mass-produced vintage replica, available online from several independent boutiques.<sup>16</sup> But even so, Zoe’s belief makes it special for her. And, like Abbie and Ali, the uniqueness of the bag is tied to family identity, in this case because both she and her mother own one.

Rarity belief is also the case for Rhuza. When asked why she had selected the animal print shirt as her most treasured garment she replied, “Because it’s a one and only unique piece of work” (Rhuza, 2018). Rhuza cannot know this to be true, but believed the item was unique. For Rhuza and Zoe, acquisition from second hand shops obscured the origins of their items, allowing them to construct a story around them. Rarity belief is reinforced by the passage of time, as it is understood that multiples will be damaged, discarded and scattered to unknown locations. Hence true rarity and rarity beliefs are brought closer as a product of keeping.

#### **9.6.4 Replaceability**

The experiences a person and a garment have been through together, and memories of these can evoke for the wearer are unique to that person and garment. This sort of uniqueness is undiminished by a garment being mass-produced or widely available. Garments that were treasured for this type of uniqueness, eventually came to be conceived as irreplaceable because of the emotional connection that

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<sup>15</sup> Abbie’s T-shirt was produced for the employees of Hawke’s Bay Exhibition Centre in New Zealand and given to them as uniform. Ali’s vests were designed and produced by Ali’s father and his fellow members of the Moscow Hash House Harriers running club.

<sup>16</sup> This presented me as a researcher with an ethical dilemma. I chose not to reveal to Zoe that her bag was not as unique as she thought. This does not change what she believed about the origin of her bag, and, I was worried that if she knew the truth, it might taint her feelings about the object.

formed. In examples from this study, the material qualities of the garment often affected the emotional relationship with it and these became intertwined. These subjective and personal criteria led to garments being thought of as irreplaceable.

Uniqueness was discussed by the participants as relating to the physical garment, what it looked and felt like, how many existed or if it had been personalized. However, when they discussed replaceability, it was often more to do with the emotion they felt about the garment. Mark highlights this difference when he says:

Yeah, and I think with this, I know this is irreplaceable, [...] It's not, of course, because I could just spend £1000 [to get another] [...] But it wouldn't be the same (Mark, 2018).

Mark knows that, as a ready-to-wear garment, his coat is not unique as the same or equivalent design is still available and there is the option to purchase another. However, he feels it would not be the same as his current coat, which is invested with emotional meaning. A replacement garment would not carry the same emotional resonance. It is in this sense that his treasured garment is seen as 'irreplaceable'.

Zoe also spoke of replaceability. Other than her treasured bag, she said, "everything else I find replaceable" (Zoe, 2018). Her bag stands out in comparison to the rest of her wardrobe because it is the only thing she feels she could not replace. There is a paradox here as both Zoe's bag and Mark's coat are physically replaceable. In practical terms, they could go and buy another, yet due to their emotional connection they are seen as irreplaceable. In contrast, Bart's leather jacket and Ali's suit were not seen as 'irreplaceable', but were valued for their fit and function over emotional connection. Yet, the leather jacket and suit would be difficult to physically replace, due the alterations made and time required to search for the 'right' one. It is clear that when people speak of irreplaceability, they are speaking about feelings rather than practical concerns.

### 9.6.5 Singularization

Kopytoff (1986: 80) identifies two spheres of value, distinguishing between objects that are commodities available to be exchanged, and objects that are singularized and kept from the market. The findings on uniqueness and irreplaceability imply that, with treasured garments, we are dealing with the singularized realm.

In economic terms, the value of a singularized object is not an outcome of the social relations of production but the result of a cultural process that occurs after the object has been produced (Kopytoff, 1986: 83). With the treasured objects in this study, the owner has endowed the object with non-inherent values both during and after its acquisition. Kopytoff stresses “non-saleability imparts to a thing a special aura of apartness from the mundane and common” (1986: 69). Treasured garments usually cannot be replaced but we have seen that when that possibility exists, emotional connections bond the person with the garment, imparting to it the attribute of irreplaceability. Irreplaceability contributes to the apartness of treasured garments, and is another driver of singularization.

The distance from the world of commodities contributes to the value of treasured garments. Kopytoff (1986) points out, there exists a scale from the perfect commodity to the perfect singularized objects. The acquisition stories of the treasured garments revealed that many of them had already moved toward singularization, whether from being a chance charity shop find, or being purchased new and then altered to fit. Some of these treasured items had never been bought or sold as commodities to the general public: Abbie’s T-Shirt was part of her grandmother’s uniform at work and Ali’s vest was commissioned by his father to wear at his running club. These items have changed hands but never beyond the family, and never with an exchange of money. The process of singularization continues with ownership, the garments becoming more personalised to the owner through physical processes such as wear, tear and repair, and the emotional experiences associated with wearing and keeping.

In contrast to treasured garments, participants found some garments replaceable, the particular type varying by participant. Zoe talked about having to replace shoes

regularly and knowing she could just buy the same ones. Mark's attitude to shopping was to find 'the perfect jeans, T-shirt, hoodie' and then buy the same brand over and over because this made them easy to replace and, in his words, "means I never get emotionally attached to clothing" (Mark, 2018). Even George and Phoebe, who would find it difficult to part with much of their clothing because of emotional attachment, said that basics such as black polo neck tops were replaceable. All participants exhibited this split in their wardrobes to a greater or lesser extent. Where garments were able to be substituted, attachments were not formed. At the end of their useful lives replaceable garments were painlessly given to a charity shop or re-sold on sites such as eBay or Depop, returning them to the sphere of exchange.

Kopytoff points out that the desire in the western capitalist societies is largely fulfilled with private singularization, which is based on:

Principals as mundane as the one that governs the fate of heirlooms and old slippers alike – the longevity of the relation assimilates them in some sense to the person and makes parting from them unthinkable (Kopytoff, 1986: 80).

In this study, the experience of ownership and memories of acquisition led toward singularization through the accumulated encounters of person and garment. Singularization fed longevity, and longevity in turn reinforced singularization. This helps to explain why, even though Mark could buy another coat it would not be the same as the one he already owns. The theory of singularization helps us to understand how garments come to be thought of as unique, irreplaceable, apart from the common, and ultimately treasured.

### **9.7 Connecting Past, Present and Future with Treasured Garments**

In this study treasured garments connected past, present and future for their wearers. They held past memories of their acquisition and use, offered present opportunities for wear and keeping, and stimulated future plans for an imagined lifetime together. As discussed above (Section 9.4), currently worn treasured garments hold memories, associations and meanings and provide temporal links for biographical construction, just as garments put aside and no longer worn do .

### 9.7.1 Past and Present

Memory was expected to play a large role in the retention and wearing of treasured garments. But it was found that these were not so much memories of specific events and situations, but rather of emotions of love, feelings of comfort, and connections to others or to other selves. The treasured garments enabled their owners to reflect on their pasts as the garments were used in the present.

George described how he felt when he wore his jacket in terms of memory, “it’s such like a lovely feeling, like every time I put it on it’s like, a lot of memories, it’s a lot of history” (George, 2018). Morgan describes memories when she wears her item: “every time I put it on just going like, you’ve made some good choices and they were scary and you’ve overcome them and it’s okay” (Morgan, 2018). These memories of personal histories and past feelings elicit positive reflections when the garment is worn or contemplated in the present. Morgan reminds us here, as discussed in Section 8.2, of links with life transitions that entailed struggle and anxieties and the pride that comes of good decisions, perceptions of growth and positive change. The treasured garment that accompanied the wearer on this journey is a reminder, able to be drawn upon for feelings of confidence.

Tom was reminded by the T-shirt of the job that he was doing at the time, and is nostalgic for a more vital and inspiring way of working:

Just for that day, you could you know, make someone’s life so much better by what we were doing and it was immediate. And, I’ve subsequently [be]come down, bogged down in a job which is full of administration [...] And this T-shirt reminds me of a different time.  
(Tom, 2018)

However, the T-shirt also reminded him of travel and trips he had been on more recently and he knows he will wear it again travelling in the future, meaning that his garment is not only used for reminiscence.

### 9.7.2 Future Plans for Treasured Garments

The future plans for treasured garments allowed participants to imagine both a future for the garment and a future for themselves. They expected the relationship with their garment to continue indefinitely.

A recurring theme was imagining passing the garment on to future children:

I'll never, ever, ever give it away, I like the idea of maybe, if I have a kid...when he's like twenty, passing it on, [...] but the idea is to have this as my coat now, forever (Mark, 2018).

This is [Helmut Lang jacket] definitely a 'my kids would wear it' (George, 2018).

Ali did not imagine his own offspring but did want to keep the item in the family: "one day, I guess my nephew will be probably be wearing it [...], it will be passed on" (Ali, 2018). Zoe had two distinct options, passing on her bag, or purchasing another version of the bag to pass on, having a bag for each of the three generations:

Mum had this idea, she was like I'm gonna go buy another one and then when you have a daughter like, you can like give one to her. (Zoe, 2018)

Hopefully have it just, forever, and then pass it on to like, my daughter or my son. (Zoe, 2018)

A desire is exhibited to turn treasured garments into heirlooms. Ali already describes his vest as a 'family heirloom' so believes he would be continuing a tradition by passing the item down to the next generation. Price et al. (2000) studied older people's disposition of cherished objects and found:

Disposition is a way to influence the future lives of others and the biographies of special things. Disposition also may be an act of curation designed to ensure a good home for a meaningful thing, especially an inalienable possession that symbolizes important family values (Price et al., 2000: 196).

The participants in this study wanted to ensure a 'good home' for their garment; Mark, for example, planned to wait until his future son was old enough before giving



him the garment so he knew how to look after it. It was important to participants to protect their garments and ensure their longevity.

Phoebe and Abbie, who received their items from their mothers, did not mention passing on the item. Both were more concerned with the immediate future: Abbie wanted to ensure the T-shirt's longevity, and Phoebe's thoughts were of repairing her skirt so it could be worn again. Those who did not plan to pass on their garment planned to keep it indefinitely, with most seeing themselves as being able to wear their item for a long time. The majority of participants said they would continue to keep their treasured garment when it was no longer worn. The word 'forever' appears in Mark and Zoe's testimony above. Rhuza also said of her shirt "I really hope it will stay forever" (Rhuza, 2018). This reveals a strong desire for permanence.

George had different plans for each of his treasured garments. His most treasured garment, the Helmut Lang jacket would be passed on to preserve its legacy; the forced gift shirt, would fulfil its creative destiny to become a rag still used for his work (see Section 6.4.2); and, the skirt, originally admired for its beauty, would be framed as a work of art. There is a sense of the garments continuing their role in his life even when he no longer wears them<sup>17</sup>. A feeling of continuity with the garment and a sense of perpetuity dominate the future plans, as Morgan puts it "it's such a nice thing to have [...] a continuous item that is sort of with you always" (Morgan, 2018).

### **9.7.3 Value as the Ability to Retain History**

Anthropologist Annette Weiner (1984; 1992; 1994) examined how value is created in objects that are kept from the market. She highlighted keeping as an important element of value creation positing that "the value created through keeping must be seen in relation to the constant threats and needs of giving" (1992: 224). Weiner was examining traditional societies in which items were traded for one another, and there were social requirements for reciprocal giving. However, we can also see this

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<sup>17</sup> However, during a follow up discussion, George revealed that he had a change of heart and 'retired' the shirt from wearing to work in order to preserve it in its current form, to save it from further disintegration.

‘threat of giving’ in a modern sense, the trend for minimalism, the proliferation of wardrobe de-cluttering guides and the societal distain for ‘hoarding’ can all be seen as potential threats to retained items.

Weiner (1984) defines the most valuable objects that a tribe or kinship group has as inalienable. These are items that would never be sold or given away, but could nevertheless be lost, stolen or forgotten. Weiner found inalienable possessions were “imbued with affective qualities that are expressions of the value an object has when it is kept by its owners and inherited within the same family or descent group” (1984: 210). She calls this ‘transcendental’ or ‘absolute’ value, going on to assert that the older an object is, as it has resisted exchange and been protected from loss, the more it has value (Weiner, 1984).

We have seen that treasured garments acquire inalienable status. The owners would not give them to anyone outside their kin group and takes steps to protect them from loss; they are the last clothing items individuals would be willing to part with. The participants in this study expressed some fear of losing their treasured garment(s). Mark said “This is the one item that I would be really sad to lose” and during his interview there was an extended discussion of how his coat could be reliably couriered to Canada. Rhuza said of hers: “I hope the moths never touch this”. Tom did not wear his garment for over a decade “in case something happened to it”. Abbie was torn between wearing and not wearing her T-shirt, preserving it as washing makes the fabric gets progressively thinner. In their care plans, participants took steps to preserve their garments from harm and slow their degradation.

As inalienable possessions, treasured garments partake of Weiner’s transcendent value. They have strong connection to personal identity and history and often, family identity and history as well.

The primary value of inalienability, however, is expressed through the power these objects have to define who one is in an historical sense. The object acts as a vehicle for bringing past time into the present, so that the histories of ancestors, titles, or mythological events become an intimate part of a person's present identity (Weiner, 1984: 210).

Although treasured garments do not have such profound histories or mythologies, the sense of bringing past time into the present through textiles and dress, resonates with the findings of this study. The ability of treasured garments to connect past and present was significant in how they were valued. Weiner adds that “keeping an object defined as inalienable adds to the value of one's past, making the past a powerful resource for the present and the future” (1984: 224). Again, we can see this in treasured garments; the participants take comfort and gain confidence from their treasured garments as they remind them of past triumphs over adversity. Furthermore, treasured garments allowed participants to imagine their descendants continuing to treasure the garments as part of their identity. The memories associated with the object become part of its accumulated history, significance and therefore, value.

Materially, clothing is in a privileged position to accumulate histories through wear, alteration and decay. The marks of use and the imprint of the person are contained within the garment. The fading on one side of George's denim jacket that shows it has been hung with one side facing the sun, the paint of George's shirt from each job, the missing beads on Zoe's bag, the rips in the seams of Phoebe's skirt, and the fraying of Rhuza's shirt all speak to those garments histories of use and wear. Whilst wear in garments can be evocative, it can lead to unwearability, making clothing a less convenient heirloom than, say, jewellery. But the extra care and attention needed for preservation potentially enhance the value of clothing in terms of investment of human energy.

### **9.8 Value as Human Time and Energy**

Graeber's (2001) theory of value revolves around human time and energy, that the production, exchange, consumption, movement and maintenance of social relations all require an investment of time and energy. Graeber saw this as an extension to Marx's conception of value: “We are clearly dealing with something along the lines of a labour theory of value. But only if we define ‘labour’ much more broadly than almost anyone working in the Marxist tradition ever has (Graeber: 2001: 45).

Graeber suggests broadening the definition of ‘labour’ to include any activity that a

person spends time or energy on. This conception allowed Graeber to conclude that it is the time and effort put into objects that makes them valuable. In this study, we have seen, the value and treasured status of an item increases with use, or, with the time and energy put into wearing, keeping, and caring for that item.

Crewe (2017) examined value specifically in relation to fashion and clothing. She referred to 'value-meaning', which puts her theory of value outside of the realm of exchange. Crewe argues that "value and significance can be seen to reside in the most unlikely of places and may emerge through everyday practices of wearing, caring, loss and remembering" (2017: 115). In this study, those everyday practices have led to treasuring. Crewe goes on to suggest value resides in the 'biogeography' of objects and "in the auto-topographical potential of goods" (2017: 116). Auto-topography is "an arrangement of those objects that constitute a physical map of memory, history and belief" (Petrelli et al., 2008). Crewe is therefore referring to clothing's ability to 'store' memory and history as well as emphasising the relationship between garment and owner. The interviews and garment stories of this study offer further examples of the relationships between garment and owner in which this type of investment value is constructed.

## 9.9 Value and Public and Private Meaning

The reasons for treasuring garments found in this sample can be grouped into the following categories:

**Connection to self**—life transitions, identity, biography

**Connection to others**—through gifting, previous ownership

**Emotional Value**—feelings wearing or concerning the garment

**Sensual Value**—combining aesthetic appearance and material handle

**Uniqueness**—rarity and irreplaceability

**Use Value**—performance qualities

Richins' (1994b: 507) review of consumption studies literature around favourite or valued possessions uncovered the following reasons they were valued, adding two further categories from her own study. These have been combined and rearranged here for purposes of comparison:

**Identity and self expression**—expressing or reinforcing the sense of self  
**Representations of interpersonal ties**—gifts from a loved one, objects made by or previously belonging to a friend or relative, mementos  
**Enjoyment**—providing pleasure  
**Appearance related**—clothing or jewellery worn for ‘audience reaction’  
**Financial aspects**—costly, expensive to replace  
**Utilitarian value**—usefulness, functionality

Parallels between this study’s findings and Richins’ can easily be drawn. The differences are a matter of perspective but significant ones. While I have placed emphasis on emotion and feeling, this is somewhat hidden in Richins’ analysis under enjoyment, which included emotional comfort (1994b: 507). In this study, the joy and comfort associated with treasured garments were brought to the fore under ‘emotional value’. There is also a cross over, as this study found forms of enjoyment also covered ‘use value’ and ‘sensual value’. ‘Uniqueness’ included conceptions of rarity, irreplaceability and investment value, which were about more than financial aspects; it is not only the monetary cost that is considered around replaceability, but the emotional one as well. ‘Connection to self’ in treasured garments, rather than reinforcing a fixed sense of self, allowed alternative selves, past and present to co-exist. There was also the opportunity for an imagined future self. Nevertheless, the similarities suggest that the reasons for treasuring garments are similar to those for valuing other types of possession.

Richins (1994b) pointed to public and private meanings of objects; public meanings are the generally agreed upon meanings of an object by a particular group. Private meanings are dependent on individual experience and not concerned with the economic value of an object. The public meanings of clothing and fashion are often the focus for research. However, these only make up part of the meaning that they have for their owners. The emphasis of this study has been inward rather than outward facing values. Fashion is not seen as something that only happens in the public gaze, but as experiences that take place in the private sphere of the wardrobe. Clothing offers many chances for being inscribed with unique and personal experiences because it is worn on the body, and intimately marked by the

body. Private meanings offer the strongest indications of the value of treasured garments.

### **9.10 Summary**

This chapter has used theories of value in order to further understanding of the treasuring process. It posits that the current exchange value is not relevant to the treasuring process. When a garment's cost had a role in how participants viewed that garment, this was entailed within the full investment value including the investment of effort, time, and attention. Treasured garments present a high investment value in this expanded sense.

In other wardrobe studies, the garment's uniqueness is rarely given as a reason for keeping a garment that is no longer worn (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007; Masuch & Hefferon, 2018). Instead sentimental value is put forward as the determinant for keeping clothing. For treasured garments, the areas in which value was produced in were identified as, connection to self, connection to others, sensual value, uniqueness, emotional value and use value. This was compared with Richens' (1994b) assessment of special possessions showing how consumption studies has parallels with discussions about clothing, but it tends to look outward for audience reaction. Here the view has been directed inward, at what the garment feels like for the individual. This gave rise to explorations of material uniqueness and emotional irreplaceability.

Whether the garment was worn or unworn was discussed in relation to its value and meanings. Unworn garments seemed to have less complex meanings than garments that had been worn, or were still worn. Those that continued to be worn layered new meanings on top of the old. However, as the discussions of uniqueness, irreplaceability and singularization showed, it was not repetitive wearing that determined treasuring, there were garments that were worn regularly that were seen as easily replaced, and treasuring often began straight away before building complex layers associated with use.

Treasured garments that were still worn were seen to connect the past, present and future for the participants and were seen as material companions in their lives.

Treasured garments have the ability to retain history through both wear and memory, and connect life narratives of the self and others. The process of treasuring a garment is one of building up layers of meaning, investing time and energy into them, through which personal value is created and sustained.

## 10. Conclusions and Contributions to Knowledge

### 10.1 Introduction

This study was initially inspired by non-academic and literary accounts of the emotional meaning of fashion and clothes. This area has been under-explored in fashion studies, which have tended to privilege the design and communicative aspects of clothing. In this investigation of how clothing becomes meaningful and valued, I wanted to access the wearer's view. Rather than look at the decision-making process around what to wear or what to keep, it examined another personal facet of the wardrobe, the practice of treasuring.

This thesis aimed to determine how garments become treasured: the nature of those garments, and the process by which they achieve and retain their status, viewed within the spectrum of ways of valuing clothing. The evidence was situated within a growing body of wardrobe studies and studies of special possessions, framed by anthropological theories of exchange and value. Treasured clothing was mapped onto theories around retained clothing, and the intertwining of garments and personal biography was explored. Hence, this thesis contributes to debates about how materiality, identity and emotion affect personal value in the wardrobe.

In order to fulfil the aims of the study, wardrobe interviews were combined with garment analysis from a sample of five women and five men living in close proximity within a London neighbourhood. Acknowledging the small sample, this study aimed for greater depth of understanding rather than generalisability. Using an abductive approach, questions were framed, interview evidence was taken, and questions refined. The evidence was analysed thematically, first by reading and coding the transcripts individually, and then conceptualising the emergent themes across the interviews. There was significant cross over between the dominant themes of materiality, emotion and identity. Emotions arose from both the materiality of the garment and experiences of wearing, as well as social connections, these led naturally to questions of identity, all of which contributed to the treasured status.



## **10.2 Reflection on Methods**

### **10.2.1. Situating myself in the research**

Qualitative research is seen as an interpretation, one that can never be completely free of the assumptions, background and previous knowledge of the author (Alvesson & Skold, 2009). Therefore, in reflecting on the methods I was also required to confront my own place in the construction of this research.

I occupy a similar demographic and life stage position as my participants. I fit their demographic as a Millennial working in the creative or third sector with a degree in arts and humanities. We had similar frames of reference and cultural experiences. We are also neighbours, although only one of the participants was well-known to me before the start of the research. This added a tighter layer of references relating to building matters: shared frustrations like poor Wi-Fi signal and building management, and shared experience of spatial constrictions. Therefore, in this research, I participated as an insider in this loose 'community'.

There were benefits and challenges to this insider position. Pre-existing neighbourly relations assisted in building trust and rapport, allowing the participants to speak more openly than they might have done to a total stranger. From a practical point of view, this aided in recruitment, as contact in communal areas was natural, which allowed more frequent reminders than would otherwise have been possible (and this group of busy young professionals needed such reminders). There could also be unspoken understandings, with participants' expecting me to 'know what they meant', and often I did. However, this can also be seen as a weakness as it meant that opinions might not have been interrogated as much as they might have been by an outsider.

One of the challenges was maintaining the formality of the interview. At times the line between interview and conversation began to blur, and I had to work hard to maintain the direction of the interview. This skill developed throughout the research; after the first two interviews, I made sure to explain at the beginning that my responses would be limited and there would be encouragement for them to continue speaking, so that there would not be an expectation for me to verbally

respond. This was part of a strategy of manufacturing distance appropriate to researching inside of a group (McCracken, 1986). An auto-ethnography at the outset of the research was one of the methods used, not just to refine the interview questions, but to situate myself as both participant and researcher. It allowed me to consider my own relationship to clothing and what I treasure.

### **10.2.2 Wardrobe Methods**

The combination of wardrobe interview and garment analysis was designed to elicit evidence from both the participant and their treasured garment. A method adapted from dress history, the garment analysis was able to reveal more about the material garment than covered by the interview. There were things that may have been left unsaid because they seem obvious in the presence of the garment, to things that were unconscious, not covered in interview questions or not mentioned due to time constraints.

The wardrobe interviews were the principal basis of the evidence and findings. The plan was to conduct the first part of the interview in the living room, gaining rapport before moving to the bedroom where the wardrobe was located. In flats where shared occupancy meant that there was not a living room, the whole interview was conducted in the bedroom. Interviews conducted in the bedroom allowed further discussion of other items in the wardrobe and modes of storage. On reflection, it might have been possible to conduct all the interviews in the bedroom to gain this advantage. Another modification suggested by implementation would be to have set an upper limit to the number of garments selected; three seems an appropriate number to allow sufficient depth of discussion.

Some questions in the garment analysis were less relevant to modern clothing or had already been answered during the interview and the garment analysis after the interview sometimes felt rushed. Even though the garment analysis was refined before the start, I now offer further revisions in a new, shorter garment analysis sheet (see Appendix 9) that could be of use to future wardrobe researchers. Being able to touch the fabric and handle the garment was an essential part of the study,

and it was useful to have it agreed with the participants beforehand. This allowed me to turn the garments inside out and examine the stitching, sometimes revealing wear and damage that the participant did not know about. Some textures were surprising, such as the roughness of Ali's shirt. It also gave the participant a chance to talk 'off the record' and indicate where to find labels, damage or other details.

The checklist for reflection, which was completed at home after the interview, was a good tool for considering my engagement with the garment. It prompted further research about the item, such as looking up similar garments for sale, auction prices, and designer information. This revealed, for example, that Zoe's bag was a replica, and that Phoebe's skirt would have a potentially high sale value. Sometimes it corroborated the participants, for example Phoebe's reference to her mum as a 'bit of a hippy' was backed up by the associated garment manufacturer, Ayesha Davar, being associated with hippy styling. This aspect of garment analysis was useful to contextualise the garments encountered in this study and would assist future research engaged with market value comparisons, or comparisons of similar types of garments. The various parts of the wardrobe study conducted offer broader perspectives and assists confidence in the findings.

### **10.2.3 Participants**

The recruitment process was more difficult than expected, there were often cancellations, sometime multiple times as the participants had busy lives and were often out in the evenings. The time of the interviews varied according to people's schedules; if it was after work, I was conscious that the participants may not have eaten, or if it was in the day, they had plans directly afterwards. Two additional interviews had been set up that were cancelled last minute and no further reply could be elicited. This demographic group, with intense work and social lives, may be more difficult to research than youth or elderly people that have more often been the subject of dress studies.

I chose to complete the transcription of each interview before the next interview took place, so that the transcription was completed while the interview was freshly

remembered. However, it meant that the interviews required spacing out by at least a week, which led to scheduling problems, as people were unwilling to book more than a few weeks in advance.

The number of participants interviewed was ten, compared to the original aim of fifteen. However after ten interviews it was felt a saturation point had been reached. Further interviews might simply have provided more examples. This was confirmed by the five workshop participants; while their evidence was transcribed, coded and analysed, it was not used in the thesis. This decision was taken as workshop participants were from a different demographic and location. The interviews were considered on their own and the small number of participants suited the kind of in-depth, rich evidence that this research sought.

### **10.3 Summary of Findings**

#### **10.3.1 The Importance of Acquisition**

Treasured garments were acquired in ways that were out of the ordinary, which contributed to them being seen as different from other clothes in the wardrobe from the start. There was often a sense of discovery or achievement involved: a sense of surprise and delight to gain ownership of the garment, whether this was through a long searched-for item acquired new, an item found in a trunk in the attic, or a beautiful garment bought at a knock-down price. Treasured garments had already moved away from the commodity sphere towards singularization from the moment of acquisition.

There was a high instance of treasured garments received as gifts, which aligns with the findings of Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) that special possessions relate to other people. This study also found that gifts retained something of the giver, represented a relationship between giver and receiver, and aided in sustaining relationships between people in line with anthropological gift theory (Mauss [1925] 1969; Graeber, 2001: 35; Carrier, 2013: 374). Here, Tom's T-Shirt had the character of a 'perfect' gift (Belk, 2010), where there was no expectation of reciprocity or continuing relationship between giver and receiver. The unusual nature of this gift

made it stand out further, and the selfless act of giving endowed the T-shirt with a symbolic meaning of altruism and caring.

For treasured garments originating from other people, the relationship between giver and receiver was more important than the garment's status as gift or commodity. Here, use can be made of Laitala and Klepp's (2018) differentiation between formal and informal exchange. This was highlighted, for example, in Rhuza's purchase of her T-Shirt and cycling leggings from friends and family members. In this case, commodity exchange worked in a parallel way to gift exchange in that these garments represented her relationship with the transactors (the designer of the T-shirt and friend selling the leggings) and retained something of them. Hence, this study identified a greater complexity of relationships with clothing than is covered by any one existing theory, including personal discovery, symbolic meaning, and an extended concept of family relationships.

### **10.3.2 Transitional Garments**

The timing of the acquisition was often linked to a life transition, a time of upheaval or development for the participant and the garment provided continuity during a time of change. While Banim and Guy (2001) recognised that women use clothing to navigate identity change by altering what they wear, the current study found that treasured garments accompany the individual through the time of change and can be worn on both sides of the transition. Using Winnicott's (1953) concept of early transitional objects that the infant uses to provide comfort in place of the caregiver, it is conceived that adults return to cloth for comfort in times of difficulty and change. Treasured garments act as material companions that can be turned to for reassurance.

Where Friese (2001) described how wedding dresses moved from use value in a visible, socially mandated performance to unworn sacred object after marriage, I argue that it is the accompaniment through the life transition that is significant in treasuring, rather than the delimited practice of ceremony. This study revealed that everyday garments can take part in private life transitions, which can endow

ordinary clothing with a sense of the sacred, with some developing mini-ritual use, such as donning a scarf before a flight, or a bow tie before a performance.

Woodward (2007) defined personal style in the words of her participants: 'this is me'. Treasured garments were found to be a way of negotiating the 'me and not me' of clothing. They were often representative of the participant's personal style, but could also represent biographical history. The treasured garment did not have to be 'me' in all senses of the word; when a garment did not fit with personal style, it was assigned a particular role such as occasion wear (e.g. for travelling or parties) in order to allow continued wear. Treasured garments could mark not only a transition in life stage but also a transition in personal style or approach to buying clothing. When this was the case, it signaled a deeper shift in identity.

Weber and Mitchell (2004) found life narratives often cohere around an item of clothing. Similarly, narrative was important to understanding treasured garments; the acquisition narrative — how participants came to own the garment — was recounted vividly by many. Treasured garments had a central place in the narrative of life transitions, and other identity narratives and were used to reflect on the changing self. Whereas Ahuvia (2005) found that loved items synthesised identity narratives, this research found that different versions of the self could co-exist in treasured garments. Wearing their garments gave the participant the opportunity to recount their narratives to others, instead of tasking clothes with communicating to others non-verbally. A compliment on a garment could spark a retelling of how the garment was acquired it and what it meant. Treasured garments were important in the creation of participants' identity narratives, and narratives were important in constructing the garments as treasured. These garments were used to both tell a story about the self and to reflectively construct the self.

### 10.3.3 Intergenerational Clothing Connections

Due to the frequent instance of intergenerational clothing connections in treasured garments, this study contributes to debates around the under-researched area of clothing movement within the family. In contrast to Corrigan's (2008) 'cast offs' implying initiation by the giver, this research encountered multiple examples of the receiver as the active party in interfamilial transactions, such as an adult child requesting an item from a parent. There were also cases in which the lines of ownership were blurred, such as Ali's 'taken' (see Section 5.3.4) and Phoebe's 'long term borrowed' (see Section 5.3.3). Corrigan (2008) and Laitala and Klepp (2017; 2018) highlighted sub-categories of gifting within families where children under 18 years of age still lived at home. This study extends the work on intergenerational clothing movement amongst adults who have left home. It also suggests new categories of gifting that include 'requested', 'taken' and 'forced'.

Curasi and Price (2004) explored parent-to-child gifting as parents selecting a home for their special possession, but in this study, the progeny selected which of their parents' clothing items they would like for themselves. In doing so, these garments came to represent something familiar and were used by adult children to stake their claim as narrators of the family history. Through treasured garments previously owned by parents, the participants were able to assert their own identity within the wider identity of the family. In claiming their clothing inheritance, the children were also able to imagine their own futures, even to giving their treasured item to future, yet to be born children. By contrast, here they retain the power of decision-making as regards the heirloom; they are imagining a continuation of their identity and their lineage through the garment.

Examples from this study also provide a counterpoint to McCracken's (1986) theory that recipients accept the giver's perception of themselves. In gifts that were 'not them', such as Morgan's or Bart's scarf, there is only a partial acceptance of this perceived identity, as shown by Bart not wearing his scarf and Morgan wearing hers only for travelling. For George, the vision his father had of him was dramatically

adapted; both George's rejection of the giver's perception and a radical re-creation of his own were assembled and held together in the same garment.

Woodward (2007) noted the relationships formed by mothers and daughters wearing the same clothing, but did not record an instance of a daughter choosing which of their mothers' clothes they would like. Not only were mother-daughter relationships materialized through treasured garments, but so were father-son ones, notably revealing underlying tensions. Bart's gift from a somewhat remote father, Ali's vest taken without asking, George's unsuitable forced gift made his own, can all be read as negotiations of complex father-son relationships. As hitherto wardrobe studies have focused predominantly on women (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007; Woodward, 2007), this study helps to address gender. This is especially important for progress in the study of intergenerational clothing connections and the findings suggest that clothing experiences can be as important for men as they have previously be found to be for women.

#### **10.3.4 Materiality to Emotion**

Emotional feelings about the treasured garments were influenced by their materiality; material and emotional resonances were intertwined. The sensual experience of the garment, especially touch, was an important feature in the feelings evoked. These feelings could be instrumental, such as warmth, or conceptual, such as power or security. Comfort was found to have the ability to cross over both these realms.

Feelings of love, joy and happiness were found to be associated with the garments people treasured. These linked to feelings of comfort and confidence in wearing. Love was given as a reason for both wearing and keeping garments. Participants said they loved their garments and that their garments brought them joy or made them happy, suggesting a two-way relationship and seeing the garment as having agency, i.e. the ability to bring joy. The ability of treasured garments to positively affect mood came through strongly, concurring with Smith and Yates (2018) who suggested that participants used clothing to manage moods. However, wearing loved clothing was linked not just to temporary moods, but to long-term well-being. Wearing



treasured garments were dependable and appeared to give participants more confidence in themselves and their clothing choices. This was enough to offset negative reactions to their style of dress; participants cared less of what others thought of them when wearing their treasured garment.

Treasured garments had a powerful effect to induce or sustain feelings of comfort. This study found that emotional comforting was distinct from physical comfort and social comfort (feeling like you fit in), questioning Miller and Woodward's definition of comfort being "conscious neither of the clothes nor of their body" (2012: 82). Morgan is certainly conscious of her scarf when she wears it for emotional comfort; awareness of the feel of the scarf is central. Phoebe's discussion of being 'on show' highlights her comfort with being aware of the interaction between body and clothing. Phoebe is 'comfy' in a dress that makes her body-aware, although she has to be in a confident mood already to wear it. The feeling of comfort was linked to increased feelings of confidence when wearing treasured garments, with comfort often engendering confidence in both the garment and the wearer. The interplay between feelings of comfort and self-confidence was found to be complex and worthy of further research. Treasured garments had an emotional complexity that stood in contrast to other items in the wardrobe.

Masuch and Heffron's study, which included three men and seven women, noted that the women's accounts "tended to be more detailed and emotionally charged" (2018: 358). In contrast, this study found the men had just as varied, complex and emotional relationships to their clothing as the women did. Themes of growing up, finding one's personal style, and moving through different life stages were common for both genders. If anything, the men were less guarded and more open in their discussion. Men shared anxieties that have been discussed in relation to women's dress, for example, worrying about fitting in, struggling to find clothing that fit them, and feeling emotionally connected to people, places and times through the clothing they kept. These findings question existing perceptions of performative differences in the way men and women relate to clothing.

### 10.3.5 Practices of Wear, Care and Repair

The majority of treasured garments were in active use; some were regularly worn, others were occasionally worn, and some no longer worn and never worn. The treasured status of items appeared to increase with wear because there was more opportunity to further layer meaning and experience onto the garment. Once wearing stops, the building of those sensually-rich experiences also stops. Therefore, unworn garments seemed to have less complex meanings than garments that had been worn, or were still worn. Although this echoes Masuch and Heffron's (2018) findings about unworn and occasionally worn clothing, this study extends these findings by showing that individuals also form emotional attachments to regularly worn clothing. Clothing currently worn has largely been left out of the picture in existing studies. This study observed that it is not just repeated wearing that determines meaningfulness, in contradistinction to Richins' (1994b) hypothesis that the most meaningful items offer the most chances of unique experiences. Participants owned garments that were worn regularly but easily replaced, but the treasured garment was seen as special in some way to begin with, and from there its meaning and value were developed through wear.

There was a tension between wanting to wear garments and wanting to preserve them. Participants understood that wear caused tear and used a variety of strategies to manage this. Limiting wear was suggested as a strategy to prolong the life of the garment by Abbie; I have called this 'conscious wearing'. The concept of 'conscious wearing' could be used to encourage people to take better care of loved clothing. This contributes to Fletcher's (2012) analysis of durability in which she argues it is the ideology of use that determines the nature of longevity. I am arguing that the emotional attachment to the garment has prompted these ideologies and innovative practices of use and wear – allowing participants to either prolong the life of their special garment through limiting wear or allowing them to wear a special garment that is outside of their usual style.

Despite professing a desire to preserve their garments, participants were slow to make necessary repairs. Belk (1988) and Mugge et al. (2005) suggested that people take greater care of special objects, while Fleetwood-Smith et al. (2019) found that people did not wish to alter their worn attachment clothing. There was evidence for both of these positions found in this research, suggesting conflicting feelings. While participants were happy to alter their garment in order to personalise it when the garment was first acquired, they were reluctant to make the basic repairs required to be able to wear it again or halt any further damage. For George's shirt, the material degradation and damage was central to its meaning; for the others, these can be read as signs of use, wear and love that the participants are hesitant to erase. If caring for the item was not shown overtly by physical actions, it was shown in the emotional labour. There was anxiety over the future of the garment, fears of it breaking, fear of loss or destruction that was distinct from the other garments participants owned.

Treasured garments were not stored in overtly different ways to other clothing. In line with other wardrobe studies, how the clothing was stored depended more on whether it was 'active' or 'inactive' and the category of garment (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007; Woodward, 2007; Hertz, 2011). Here, inactive garments were often stored separately from the main wardrobe and suits were stored in suit carriers as is common practice. The most important thing for the participants was that they knew where they could find the treasured item if they needed it. The treasured garments had a special place in people's heads, even if they did not have a special place in their wardrobes.

### **10.3.6 Treasured Garments and Theories of Value**

In this study, treasured garments were rarely of high economic value, although the price did affect the acquisition of the garment and how participants viewed it to begin with. There was a value hierarchy in regard to designer names: George kept his jacket even when he didn't wear it because it was by Helmut Lang, and Abbie suggested she should treat her T-Shirt 'like a designer piece' in how she cared for it. However, treasured garments derive their meaning largely from personal frames of

value, even if, in a capitalist society, this interacts with economic value. The concept of 'investment value' was discussed and widened to include time and energy spent on clothing as well as money, in order to more accurately reflect the relationship between personal value, meaning and economic value.

The process of treasuring can be read as ever increasing singularization; treasured garments move from commodities to inalienable objects. Some methods of acquisition such as gifts or second hand purchases obscured the commodity status of the item from the outset. Uniqueness was defined in terms of rarity value. This could be achieved through personalisation or alteration, or through awareness of the numerical scarcity of the garment. Irreplaceability, on the other hand, was concerned with emotional uniqueness. The participant could not replace the item as a replacement item 'wouldn't be the same', even if the replacement item looked virtually identical. A belief in the garment's material uniqueness or emotional irreplaceability, whether accurate or not, had the effect of singularizing the object, thereby adding to its value.

Throughout the interviews, references were made to fate, serendipity or magical properties of garments or givers. Theories of affect (Ruggereone, 2017) were proposed to aid in understanding this feeling of pre-cognitive connection and importance, the moment an object 'sparks joy' (Kondo, 2011; 2017). Belk's (1989) theory of 'sacredness' was compared to the 'magical revelation' of the treasured garments. By whatever means this other worldly sense is analysed or explained, it is clear that this is a further way that participants saw treasured garments as set apart from the mundane. This study traced the strategies and process by which treasured garments become singularized and a key part in this process was their transformation from ordinary to extraordinary.

### **10.3.7 The Symbolic Density of Treasured Garments**

The terms ‘nostalgic’ (Masuch & Heffron, 2018) or ‘sentimental’ (Banim & Guy, 2001), could not fully explain the phenomenon of treasured garments. Both nostalgia and sentiment have somewhat negative connotations around romanticised visions of the past and longing for times gone by. By contrast, treasured garments were found to connect past, present and future through emotionally complex narratives, allowing the participants to imagine their own futures as well as to reflect on their pasts.

Annette Weiner’s term of ‘symbolically dense objects’ seems appropriate here. Weiner observed that in traditional societies some objects become so symbolically dense with “cultural meaning and value that others have difficulty prying these treasures away from their owners” (1994: 394). In the evidence presented in this study, treasured garments became dense with personal meanings. Density accrued via a connection to self, a connection to others, sensual value, uniqueness, emotional value and use value; the categories depart from those offered by Weiner, especially in their perspective — this study offers an emotional and personal view of treasured meanings rather than an outward societal view. Symbolic density aids in explaining the feeling of irreplaceability and desire to retain the treasured garment.

Using density as a metaphor for treasuring encompasses the variety of reasons that garments were treasured and the complex layering of meanings observed and building over time and occasions of wearing. Clothing in particular offers multiple ways to build meaning, as it is close to the body and is used in both the private and public sphere. Conceptualising treasured garments as both ‘singular’ and ‘dense’ rather than nostalgic or sentimental enables their complexity of meaning to be retained and emphasised.

#### **10.4 Contributions to Knowledge**

Through the examination of treasured garments, this research has provided a new perspective on wardrobe studies by privileging the 'wearer's view' and emotional responses to clothing. Evidence about how it feels to wear and keep treasured garments, and the personal meanings of clothing, provide a counter point to existing research which has been dominated by a focus on the unworn and on the ecological advantages of keeping. The participant group of this study gave representation to an age bracket that is currently understudied. It also extends the potential wardrobe to encompass the wider 'family' from whom items can be requested, borrowed or taken. This study also offers a rare glimpse of the male perspective on attachment clothing as existing studies are almost exclusively about women. Within the male response, an influence of sexuality is hinted at, notably in the area of father-son relationships referenced in the wardrobe.

The methodology of this research expands the focus of wardrobe studies by concentrating attention on one garment in relation to the wardrobe. Previously, wardrobe studies have viewed the wardrobe as a whole, through particular classes of item (such as jeans), or through functional groupings, especially if garments were worn or unworn. By using a combination of wardrobe interview and garment analysis this research offers a new tool to aid in the analysis of a wardrobe study.

This research has synthesized work on 'special' and 'cherished' objects from consumption studies, theories of exchange from anthropology/material culture and fashion studies, bringing this information together in the study of treasured garments. This study has applied Kopytoff's theory of singularization to treasured garments, showing a relationship between singularization and valuing. It has also used Weiner's theories highlight distinctions and similarities between cultural inalienability and private treasuring. By bringing together various theories of value, the research proposes expanding the term 'investment value' to include elements of the personal economy such as duration and emotion.

This research recommends modifying or replacing several terms found in the literature. The results of the research challenge the meaning and application of the word 'comfort' suggested by Miller and Woodward (2012), adding another frame of meaning in relation to clothes' 'emotional comforting'. This study argues that the comfort of treasured garments was due to the participants being aware of both the garments and their body, instead of comfort being the absence of these sensations. The findings also challenge the use of the words 'nostalgic' and 'sentimental' to describe attachment, special or treasured clothing, instead suggesting the term 'symbolic density'. By examining the intergenerational clothing connections apparent in treasured garments, this research has shown the application of existing categories of informal clothing movement within families, but it has also proposed additional categories such as 'requested' and 'taken' in which the receiver is the active party.

### **10.5 Directions for Future Study**

This research has opened up questions about the relationship between meaning, value, wearing and treasuring. To take this research forwards, I would like to examine how public economic value and personal value are constructed in clothing and the intersections between these. As this research began with an idea for an exhibition, there is also scope to apply the findings to exhibition making and fashion in the museum. This study has begun to examine the relation of single garments to the entire wardrobe, there is space to continue this direction, perhaps tracing the move of less singular items through the wardrobe to aid in understanding acquisition, exchange, retention and divestment of clothing. A larger study across a range of age ranges might observe whether treasured garments move from being worn or unworn over time. This larger study could further examine if there is a dominant type of garment that is treasured.

Comfort was highlighted as an area of interaction between materiality and emotion, and the feeling of comfort was linked to mood and self-confidence. A similar method of in-depth wardrobe interview could investigate the importance and nuances of

feeling comfortable in clothing, and the relationship between confidence and comfort. The intergenerational clothing connections revealed by this study suggests a largely untapped area for investigation of clothing circulation between parents and progeny, interviewing multiple generations living in different households about inherited or passed down clothing.

This study considered men's approach to treasured garments as well as women's. While investigations of the emotional relationship between women and their clothes are expanding, there is a gender imbalance in dress study that allows the persistence of gender stereotypes. Further study of men's relationship to clothing is particularly desirable, especially in the wardrobe study area. What is the relation between work, identity and dress? Three of the five men interviewed for this study self-identified as gay, and the stories told in their interviews related to both coming out and fathers. This revealed potential for examining gay men's emotional experience of clothing.

The direction of this study intersects with the adjacent area of sustainable fashion, for example the concept of 'conscious wearing' suggests a strategy to prolong an item's wearable life. Understanding how personal value is constructed could help in promoting ways to connect with clothing. Similarly, in regard to fashion and dress in the museum, research on treasured clothing highlights emotional connection as a reason why people keep garments. This could help to explain why certain items appear in museum collections, and encourage curators to look at their collections with a new perspective. It is hoped that this research may inspire curators to seek to add treasured garments with their stories into their collections.

### **10.6 Making the Ordinary Extraordinary**

Treasured garments can be seen in terms of transformations and transitions, from one phase of life to another, from commodity to inalienable possession. But they also hold the sense of continuity and stability that carries one through such transitions. Treasured garments are not too sacred to be touched, used or worn,



neither are they a pair of favourite shoes that will eventually be replaced by a new favourite. They occupy a liminal space, between the ordinary and the extraordinary with the ability to move between these two realms, giving them a unique status; they are both ordinary and extra-ordinary to their owners.

This research has traced how clothes become treasured, how meaning and value is accrued by material objects, and how clothes are adapted to this function. Treasured garments can be viewed as part of a process of layering of dense meaning over time; this density can weigh heavy on their owners, shown in their guilt about care practices and fear of loss or further damage. The things that people desire from and treasure about their clothing is not so different to what people desire in other aspects of their life: a connection with others, kindness, comfort, love and happiness, and a way of understanding the self. These basic human needs are highlighted in the relationships between people and their garments. Clothes are too often studied removed from the people that fill them up, both physically and emotionally. Those garments that people 'want, covet, desire, wear, use, love, tear and soil,' become treasured through lives lived in and with them.

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## Appendix 1: Checklist for Observation and Reflection

Checklists for Object Analysis (Adapted from *The Dress Detective* Mida & Kim, 2015)

## General

1a. What type of garment is it?	b. Is the garment intended for Male, Female, Unisex?
2a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment?	b. Are these fabrics predominantly natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend?
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment?	4. Does the garment have any labels?
5.a What decade does the garment belong to?	5.b Was the garment acquired new, second hand or is it 'vintage' (over 50 years old)
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment?	8. Does the wardrobe have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period?
<b>Construction</b>	
9. Describe the main components of the garments construction:	
If relevant to your research, note the measurements	
10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body?	
11. Does the garment have any hand stitching or finishing?	

12. How is the garment closed or fastened? Describe the locations of the fastenings
13. Are there any front, side, flap or hidden pockets?
14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of non-traditional materials or structural elements?
15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment?
16. Is there any indication that construction is inconsistent with the presumed dating of the garment.
17. Is the garment reinforced in any way such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements?
18. Is the garment lined? Have any other textiles been used in the garment or the lining?
<b>Textile</b>
19. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stenciling, painting or manipulation of the fabric?
20. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there any signs that such decoration has been removed?

21. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires or boning?
22. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in colour with the passage of time?
<b>Labels</b>
23. List and describe the labels found in the garment – is there a maker label? A store label? A size label? Care Labels? Or markings/ labels to indicate the owner such as a name label or embroidered initial? Do they reveal anything about the garments history?
<b>Use, Alteration and Wear</b>
24. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way?
25. Where does the garment show wear?
26. Is the garment spoiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk spilt or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? Stains?
27. Has the garment been dyed to alter it's original colour? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed?

28. Does the collection (person in this case) have any provenance records associated with the garment? Photographs? Indication of original price? Original tags or packaging?

### Checklist for Reflection

<p>Sight</p> <p>1. Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references</p>	<p>2. Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it?</p>
<p>Touch</p> <p>3. What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment?</p>	
<p>Sound</p> <p>4. Would the person wearing this garment make a noise?</p>	
<p>Smell</p> <p>5. Does the garment smell?</p>	
<p><b>Personal Reactions</b></p>	
<p>6. Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment? Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body?</p>	
<p>7. How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause you discomfort or pain?</p>	

8. Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and colour appealing to you?
9. Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design?
10. Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humor, joy, sorrow or fear?
11. Do you have an emotional reaction to this garment? Can you identify a personal bias that should be acknowledged in your research?
<b>Contextual Information</b>
1. Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?
2. Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer – reviewed journals?
3. Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) for sale on Etsy, Ebay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites?
4. Are there photographs, paintings or illustrations of this garment, or similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections or online?
5. Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, or novels, and other forms of written

material?

6. Is the maker of the garment a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?



## Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet



### **Treasured Garments: Identity, Memory and Value**

I am inviting you to take part in my PhD research about treasured garments. This information is to help you understand why the research is being done and what participation would involve.

The study investigates clothing that people cherish above others and the reasons they have for doing so. The garment in question will be something you would not wish to be without, your most treasured garment. It could be a garment you still wear, have worn in the past but no longer wear or have never worn.

The study will interview you in your own home. It will involve having the garment present during the interview, allowing the researcher to touch/ examine the garment, showing the researcher where and how the item is stored, and showing any photographs of the garment being worn.

This research aims to create an exhibition (either in a physical space or online) to share the stories and history of your treasured garment with a wider audience, if you do not want your information/ garment to be a part of this, please let the researcher know using the consent form. It is possible to be a part of the research without being part of the exhibition.

This study is offering the opportunity to be involved to everyone on this street and taking part is entirely voluntary. After going through this information sheet and any questions you have, you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. Even after signing, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

#### **If you choose to take part this is what will happen:**

- The researcher will take data such as your name, address, age, gender, ethnic background and contact details, these details will be held securely and not shared with anyone else in line with The Data Protection Act, 1998.

- The researcher will arrange a time to come to your home and conduct an interview with you about your garment, wardrobe and memories associated with them. This interview will last between 1 and 2 hours and there will be 2 researchers present.
- The researcher will handle, measure and examine your garment while you are present. If your garment is delicate or fragile and you do not want it to be handled, please note this on the consent form (point 5).
- Interviews will be sound and video recorded, the researcher will also take photographs of the garment, where it is stored and your home.
- You can request anonymity in this study and choose the pseudonym that you will be referred to as. If you do not request anonymity, the researchers will use your first or given name.
- No personal data will be shared with anyone else, the photographs, videos, audio recordings will only be shown in public with your prior, written consent.

**In order to prepare for the interview please:**

- Identify your most treasured garment and consider the reasons you have for treasuring it
- Locate any images/ photographs of the garment being worn
- Ensure you have easy access to the garment and know where it is stored in order to show the researchers

As you will be discussing memories associated with your treasured garment, this may bring up strong/ upsetting emotions and recollections. If your garment is delicate or fragile, please note that moving and handling it may cause damage, the researcher will not touch your garment without your consent.

No expenses will be paid for participation in this research.

You can find information on the project at [www.treasuredgarments.co.uk](http://www.treasuredgarments.co.uk)

If you have any further questions, comments or complaints, please use the contact details below or speak to me in person.

**Contact Details**

**Sophie Wood, Researcher** [sophie.wood@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.wood@stu.mmu.ac.uk) 07841520661

**Dr Alison Slater, Research Supervisor** [a.slater@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:a.slater@mmu.ac.uk) 0161 247 1291

**Address:** G15, Grosvenor Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Cavendish Street, Manchester, M15 6BR

## Appendix 3: Screen Grabs of www.treasuredgarments.com

Treasured Garments

[Home](#) [Info for Participants](#)



## About

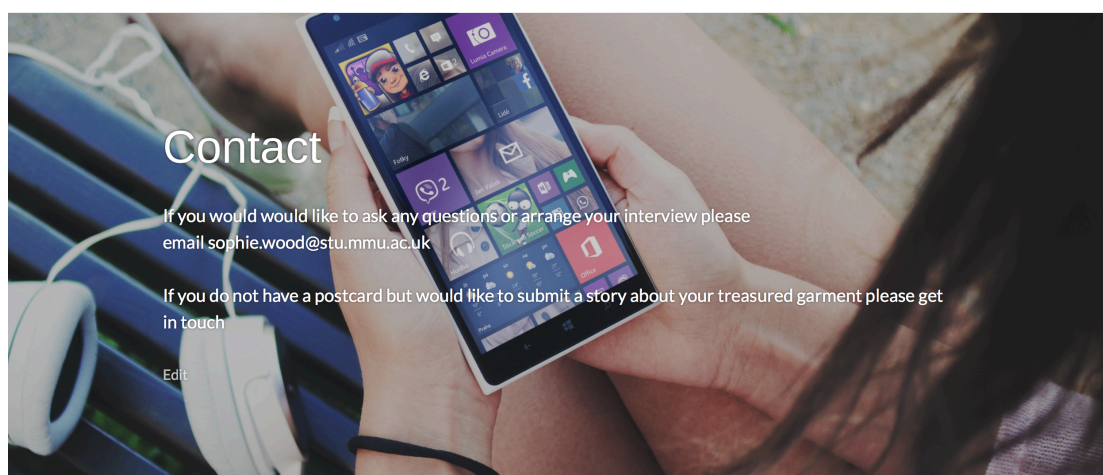
Why do we value some clothes above others? What is it about a garment that makes it difficult or impossible to part with? How does our relationship with these garments affect our everyday life?

These are just some of the questions my PhD research sets out to answer through a study of individuals' most treasured garments.

The dictionary definition of 'treasured' is 'keep carefully' and/or 'value highly', it could be an item worn often, infrequently or not at all. What matters is the connection between the person and the garment.

Over the next 3 months we will be conducting interviews with people from South East London about their most treasured garments. If you have received a card through your letterbox, you've come to the right place! Please visit the ['Info for Participants' Page](#) to find out more.

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# About

## The Researcher



I'm Sophie, a PhD student who lives in South East London but studies at Manchester Metropolitan University at the Manchester Fashion Institute.

I have a life long interest in the power of fashion and clothing, it always meant more to me than simply having 'the latest style' or dressing appropriately for the occasion or weather. A self confessed hoarder, I find it very difficult to throw things away.

My previous jobs at high street stores and vintage markets mean I've amassed a large amount of clothes, many of them I don't wear. However, just because I have kept an item of clothing, it doesn't mean it's treasured, in fact, there are only 1 or 2 items in my wardrobe that I would describe as 'treasured'. This realisation formed the foundations of this project.

I hold an MA in Fashion Curation from London College of Fashion and a BA (Hons) in English Literature from Goldsmiths (University of London).



## Treasured Garments



### What happens if I agree to take part?

- The research will take data such as your name, address, age, gender, ethnic background and contact details, these details will be held securely and not shared with anyone else in line with The Data Protection Act, 1998.
- The researcher will arrange a time to come to your home and conduct an interview with you about your garment, wardrobe and memories associated with them. This interview will last between 1 and 2 hours and there will be 2 researchers present.
- Interviews will be sound and video recorded, the researcher will also take photographs of the garment, where it is stored and your home.
- The researcher will handle, measure and examine your garment while you are present. If your garment is delicate or fragile and you do not want it to be handled, please note this on the consent form.
- You can request anonymity in this study and choose the pseudonym that you will be referred to as. If you do not request anonymity, the researchers will use your first or given name.
- No personal data will be shared with anyone else, the photographs, videos, audio recordings will only be shown in public with your prior, written consent.

If you have received a postcard through your door advertising this research then you're eligible to be interviewed about your treasured garment. Taking part is entirely voluntary and unpaid, you are free to withdraw at any time and request that all data held about you is destroyed.

#### **What is this research about?**

The research investigates clothing that people cherish above others and the reasons they have for doing so. The garment in question will be something you would not wish to be without, your most treasured garment. It could be a garment you still wear, have worn in the past but no longer wear or have never worn.

#### **Where will the interview take place?**

The study will interview you in your own home. It will involve having the garment present during the interview, allowing the researcher to touch/ examine the garment, showing the researcher where and how the item is stored, and showing any photographs of the garment being worn.

#### **What happens to the information I give?**

This research aims to create an exhibition (either in a physical space or online) to share the stories and history of your treasured garment with a wider audience, if you do not want your information/ garment to be a part of this, please let the researcher know using the consent form. It is possible to be a part of the research without being part of the exhibition.

#### **How do I prepare for the interview?**

- Identify your most treasured garment and consider the reasons you have for treasuring it
- Locate any images/ photographs of the garment being worn
- Ensure you have easy access to the garment and know where it is stored in order to show the researchers

As you will be discussing memories associated with your treasured garment, this may bring up strong/ upsetting emotions and recollections and it is advisable to prepare yourself for this. If your garment is delicate or fragile, please note that moving and handling it may cause damage, the researcher will not touch your garment without your consent.

#### **Any Questions?**

If you have any additional questions please email [sophie.wood@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.wood@stu.mmu.ac.uk)

Download a printable version of the Participant Information Sheet [here](#)

Download the consent form [here](#)

Edit

#### **Appendix 4: Interview Questions and Prompts**

##### **BG1: 'Can you tell me a bit about yourself?'**

**Prompts** – Name, age, job, family, friends, how do you spend your spare time, marital status, how long have you lived in London, how long have you lived in this flat, where have you lived before?

##### **BG2: 'How do you feel about clothes and fashion?'**

**Prompts** – Why do you feel this way?

##### **BG3: 'How would you describe your style?'**

**Prompts** – Could you describe a 'typical' outfit?

##### **BG4: 'How often do you purchase clothing?'**

**Prompts** – Where do you purchase clothing from? How expensive each item on average? What do you think your average monthly spend on clothes is? What were the last three things you purchased? What is your attitude to shopping – in store or online?

##### **BG5: 'How easy/difficult do you find throwing clothing away?'**

**Prompts** – When was the last time you had a clear out? Which items are easier to get rid of? Which items are more difficult to get rid of? Where do you clothes go when you divest of them?

##### **TG1: 'Can you show me your treasured garment?'**

**Prompts** – Can you describe it to me?

##### **TG2: 'Tell me about your treasured garment'**

**Prompts** – Where has it been worn? How often is it worn? Memories of wearing it? How it was acquired? Reason for keeping it? When it became thought of as

treasured/ special? How does it feel (touch)? How do you feel when you wear it?  
How do you feel about your garment? Does it fit in with your personal style?

**TG3: 'Tell me about where you store your treasured garment'**

**Prompts** – In the main wardrobe or somewhere else? How is it cared for? Reason for the location? If stored in the wardrobe encourage participant to discuss other items they own.

**TG4: 'What is the future for this item?'**

**Prompts** – Will you keep it or divest? If divest where will it go/ who will it be given to? Will you wear the garment again? Will you keep it if you no longer wear it? How would you feel if the garment was lost?

**TG5: 'Is there a garment that you wished you still had, that you would treasure if you still had it?'**

**Prompts** – Memories of the garment? Occasions of wearing? Why the garment is no longer in possession?

## Appendix 5: Example of a filled in Object Analysis Checklist – Phoebe

### General

1a. What type of garment is it? <b>Skirt</b>	b. Is the garment intended for Male, Female, Unisex? <b>Female</b>
2a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment? <b>100% Viscose</b>	b. Are these fabrics predominantly natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend? <b>Synthetic</b>
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment? <b>Large floral painterly pattern with bright pinks, purples and oranges</b>	4. Does the garment have any labels? <b>Yes, one care label at the back and a 'made in india' label in the hem</b>
5.a What decade does the garment belong to? <b>Late 70s/ early 80s</b>	5.b Was the garment acquired new, second hand or is it 'vintage' (over 50 years old) <b>2<sup>nd</sup> hand, used to be her mother's</b>
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment? <b>The print</b>	8. Does the collection (wardrobe) have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period? <b>There are other similar large printed patterns and bright colours, but nothing by the same designer</b>
<b>Construction</b>	
<p>9. Describe the main components of the garments construction:</p> <p><b>Long, full skirt with large pleats that come from the middle of the waist band. The waist has a flat panel at the front and is elasticated at the back.</b></p> <p>If relevant to your research, note the measurements in both imperial and metric such as:</p> <p><b>Length (measured waistband to hem) 95cm</b> <b>Waist 45.5cm</b></p>	
<p>10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body?</p> <p><b>The waist</b></p>	



11. Does the garment have any hand stitching or finishing? <b>No</b>
12. How is the garment closed or fastened? Describe the locations of the fastenings <b>No fastenings</b>
13. Are there any front, side, flap or hidden pockets? <b>x 2 side 'invisible' pockets, the inside of the pockets is printed with a contrasting fabric</b>
14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of non-traditional materials or structural elements? <b>The stitching is quite uneven and even messy in places. It's just one line of stitching in a pink thread that doesn't match any of the colours of the skirt making it look as if it could homemade, however there is a maker label and a 'made in India' tag.</b>
15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment? <b>N/A</b>
16. Is there any indication that construction is inconsistent with the presumed dating of the garment. <b>No</b>
17. Is the garment reinforced in any way such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements? <b>No</b>
18. Is the garment lined? Have any other textiles been used in the garment or the lining? <b>No</b>
<b>Textile</b>
20. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stenciling, painting or manipulation of the fabric? <b>Yes, a large printed pattern hem, pattern is a large, abstract floral featuring bright</b>

<p><b>pinks, purples and orange with a contrasting horizontal stripe pattern forming a boarder along the hem. Fabric appears to have been screenprinted</b></p>
<p>21. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there any signs that such decoration has been removed?</p> <p><b>Flat panel at waist where the pleats of the skirt come from</b></p>
<p>22. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires or boning?</p> <p><b>No</b></p>
<p>23. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in colour with the passage of time?</p> <p><b>The print is still very bright and vibrant so it is difficult to tell if there has been any fading</b></p>
<p><b>Labels</b></p>
<p>24. List and describe the labels found in the garment – is there a maker label? A store label? A size label? Care Labels? Or markings/ labels to indicate the owner such as a name label or embroidered initial? Do they reveal anything about the garments history?</p> <p><b>There are 2 labels in the garment, the first is at the back of the waist and reads 'Ayesha Davar', the maker name and 'M', the size, on the reverse are the care instructions and fabric composition.</b></p> <p><b>There is another small label in the side seam that reads 'Made in India'</b></p>
<p><b>Use, Alteration and Wear</b></p>
<p>31. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way?</p> <p><b>No</b></p>
<p>32. Where does the garment show wear?</p> <p><b>There are 2 marks at the waist from where the garment has been hung, other than small damages, the condition of the fabric is good and there are not many signs of 'wear'</b></p>

<p>33. Is the garment spoiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk spilt or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? Stains?</p> <p><b>The elastic has stretched at the waist so the waist no longer holds it's shape, there are various pulls on the fabric at the waist, split seams on the LHSAW and a split seam at the hem, some of the stitching has also come loose. The pulls and split seams are not noticeable until you look closely or inside the garment. The owner commented that she quite likes some of the fabric pulls as you can see different colours underneath.</b></p>	
<p>34. Has the garment been dyed to alter it's original colour? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed?</p> <p><b>No</b></p>	
<p>35. Does the collection (person in this case) have any provenance records associated with the garment? Photographs? Indication of original price? Original tags or packaging?</p> <p><b>The garment belonged to her mother, Phoebe said she may ask her mother if she can remember how much it cost or where and when it was purchased, there is a photograph, Phoebe is going to send me one.</b></p>	

### Checklist for Reflection

<p>Sight</p> <p>Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references</p> <p><b>Artistic references in that the print is quite impressionistic in style. It's a very bohemian looking skirt.</b></p>	<p>Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it?</p> <p><b>The garment is late 70s/ early 80s and is 70s maxi skirt reflecting a hippie influence.</b></p>
<p>Touch</p> <p>What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment? <b>The skirt is very soft, so soft that the participant had assumed there was cotton in it and not 100% viscose. Its soft, smooth with quite a light weight.</b></p>	
<p>Sound</p> <p>Would the person wearing this garment make a noise? <b>No</b></p>	

<p>Smell</p> <p>Does the garment smell? <b>Not a noticeable smell, no but the participant commented it used to smell like her Mum when she first got it.</b></p>
<p><b>Personal Reactions</b></p> <p>Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment? Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body?</p> <p><b>I am the same gender as the person who wore it, but I am shorter and smaller, the garment would be able to fit my body if I used a belt, although it might be a bit long for me.</b></p>
<p>How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause you discomfort or pain?</p> <p><b>If belted, it would be tight at the waist and then loose as that's the style of the skirt, it wouldn't cause discomfort or pain, it would be a comfortable garment to wear.</b></p>
<p>Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and colour appealing to you?</p> <p><b>I might wear this garment, because I really like the bold print but I don't usually wear long, full skirts like this as they tend to drown me as I'm quite petite. I might wear it on a summer holiday but I'm not sure I would wear it in England as my participant has done. Like her, I would wear it with a plain black top and possibly some kind of headscarf.</b></p>
<p>Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design?</p> <p><b>No</b></p>
<p>Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humor, joy, sorrow or fear?</p> <p><b>It's a very joyful garment, it's very bright, happy and fun. The looseness and movement of the pleats makes it seem very carefree, it is not restricted or tight. It is a skirt so you could say that there is a gendered element, but the skirt is full length and does not show off the body but keeps it covered, so although it is eye catching, it is not a sexy garment. It is a skirt I can imagine and art teacher or creative person wearing, because of the bold print and design, it's for someone who isn't afraid to stand out.</b></p>
<p>Do you have an emotional reaction to this garment? Can you identify a personal</p>

<p>bias that should be acknowledged in your research?</p> <p><b>I had an emotional reaction to the garment because it reminded me of a pair of culottes my Mum had and I now have, the print is a similar style and the fabric is the same (soft viscose), and the shape of pulling in at the waist and flaring out is also similar. I also really like the print because it's so bright. That said, I don't believe that this amounts to a 'personal bias' that needs to be formally acknowledged</b></p>
<p><b>Contextual Information</b></p>
<p>23. Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?</p> <p><b>Not in museums but in stores like Etsy, Oxfam and Ebay all have Ayesha Davar items, it seems to be a known vintage brand – see last box for links and additional information</b></p>
<p>24. Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer – reviewed journals?</p> <p><b>The skirt and Ayesha Davar are associated with the 'Hippy' style of dress and also referred to as 'Boho' and lots of references are made to the fact it was made in India, so, while I couldn't identify any scholarly work on this designer in particular, much has been written on hippie styles and maxi skirts.</b></p>
<p>25. Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) for sale on Etsy, Ebay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites?</p> <p><b>There are other garments by Ayesha Davar for sale on Etsy, Ebay and other vintage sites, but none of them are in this style, the style is more of an indian or ethnic influence and shape, the designer is known for her prints and patterns but this skirt does not seem like one of her typical designs. The prices indicate that these dresses are desirable, they are upwards of £70, with some over £100 where as standard vintage clothing is not usually this expensive.</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.barefoot-vintage.co.uk/product/ayesha-davar-cardamom-yellow-flower-print-maxi-dress/">https://www.barefoot-vintage.co.uk/product/ayesha-davar-cardamom-yellow-flower-print-maxi-dress/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/392143341339?ViewItem=&amp;item=392143341339">https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/392143341339?ViewItem=&amp;item=392143341339</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/womens-clothing/vintage/ayesha-davar-size-34-orange-vintage-dress-hd_101364958">https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/womens-clothing/vintage/ayesha-davar-size-34-orange-vintage-dress-hd_101364958</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.barefoot-vintage.co.uk/product/sold-ayesha-davar-ivory-flower-print-maxi-dress-uk-10-14/">https://www.barefoot-vintage.co.uk/product/sold-ayesha-davar-ivory-flower-print-maxi-dress-uk-10-14/</a></p>

[https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/633554790/ayesha-davar-1970s-vintage-indian-gauze?ga\\_order=most\\_relevant&ga\\_search\\_type=all&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_search\\_query=ayesha%20davar&ref=sr\\_gallery-1-6](https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/633554790/ayesha-davar-1970s-vintage-indian-gauze?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=ayesha%20davar&ref=sr_gallery-1-6)

[https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/248590215/ayesha-davar-vintage-indian-cotton-black?ga\\_order=most\\_relevant&ga\\_search\\_type=all&ga\\_view\\_type=gallery&ga\\_search\\_query=ayesha%20davar&ref=sr\\_gallery-1-11](https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/248590215/ayesha-davar-vintage-indian-cotton-black?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=ayesha%20davar&ref=sr_gallery-1-11)

26. Are there photographs, paintings or illustrations of this garment, or similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections or online?

**No**

27. Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, or novels, and other forms of written material?

**No**

28. Is the maker of the garment a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?

Ayesha Davar is not a 'famous' designer but the name does seem to carry weight on vintage re-sale sites, the only information I have found online has come from the notes on listings on such websites. Barefoot Vintage says:

"Bohemian, elegantly lengthy gown by London based designer Ayesha Davar, who I feel has designed some of the most beautiful garments I have seen. This beauty is so reminiscent of some of Ayesha's contemporary designers of the time, such as Ossie Clark and Biba. Her dresses are made in India and are almost always cut using the most eye-catching and unique block print fabrics. This beauty is made from a marvellous ivory indian cotton fabric with a beautiful pink and blue flower print. Fabulously fluttery sleeves, a plunging button through neckline with several covered buttons leading to an empire line, fastened at the undercuts with a matching fabric tie to secure."

And

"London-based designer Ayesha Davar designed some of the most beautiful garments found, and while reminiscent of her contemporaries Ossie Clark and Biba, Ayesha's dresses were made in India and almost always cut using the most eye-catching and unique block print fabrics."

This website has multiple listings for Ayesha Davar dresses and notes that the prints

are one of her signatures, this fits in with the bold print on this skirt. She is also compared to more famous contemporaries such as Ossie Clark and Biba. But, as mentioned above, the other designs I have seen for sale online have more obvious Indian influences in both print and shape, in this way, this skirt stands outside of those.

Beyond the Vintage, a vintage seller on Etsy has this information about the designer:

ABOUT THE LABEL:~

"In the 1970s London-based designer Ayesha Davar designed some of the most beautiful Indian garments around. She first started selling imports in 1967, and then on the advice of John Lyndon, director of The Beatles shop Apple Boutique, went on to design her own brand of clothing. She worked with her mother in India who translated her designs and shipped them over. She became famous for her unique designs. Many chains and shops stocked her original pieces in the 70s, including Monsoon, Chelsea Girl, Fenwick's and Ziggis boutique. Her designs are collectable, but also incredibly wearable today."

## Appendix 6: Consent Form



**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**

Sophie Wood  
PhD Researcher  
Manchester Fashion Institute  
Righton Building  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Tel: 07841520661

### Consent Form

**Title of Project: Treasured Garments: Identity, Memory and Value**

**Name of Researcher: Sophie Wood**

**Please initial box:**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above project, have had the opportunity to ask questions about the interview procedure and agree to take part in the project. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. ☐
3. I understand the interviews will be carried out in my own home ☐
4. I consent to audio and visually recordings of myself, home and wardrobe for this research project ☐
5. I consent to the handling of my treasured garment by the researcher ☐
6. I give permission for all recordings to be archived as part of the research project, making it available to future researchers. ☐
7. I give permission for video recordings and images to be used in in public exhibitions about this research. ☐
8. I understand that at my request a transcript of my interview and copies of photographs/ videos can be made available to me upon request. ☐
9. I give permission for my first name to be used to refer to me in this research ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*



## Appendix 7: List of Early Codes, August 2018

Initial list of nodes created, this grew as the analysis continued

<b>Name</b>	<b>Created On</b>	<b>Created By</b>	<b>Modified On</b>	<b>Modified By</b>
Clothes as Companions	31 Aug 2018 at 11:09:54	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 11:10:17	SW
Comfort	31 Aug 2018 at 12:53:11	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:53:30	SW
Cost and Value	31 Aug 2018 at 10:36:20	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:36:37	SW
Description of Treasured Garment	31 Aug 2018 at 12:39:14	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:40:09	SW
Fashion	31 Aug 2018 at 10:32:50	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:33:16	SW
Ethical Fashion	31 Aug 2018 at 10:34:37	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:35:29	SW
Items people plan on keeping	31 Aug 2018 at 12:34:41	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:35:31	SW
Love	31 Aug 2018 at 10:32:23	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:32:46	SW

Personal Style	31 Aug 2018 at 10:37:39	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:38:27	SW
Reasons for Divestment	31 Aug 2018 at 10:49:22	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:49:55	SW
Reasons Garment is Treasured	31 Aug 2018 at 11:12:03	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:35:14	SW
Shopping	31 Aug 2018 at 10:28:46	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:35:48	SW
Brands	31 Aug 2018 at 11:25:26	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:35:43	SW
Charity Shops	31 Aug 2018 at 10:29:48	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:30:12	SW
High Street Shops	31 Aug 2018 at 10:31:07	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:31:34	SW
Online Shopping	31 Aug 2018 at 10:31:42	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 10:32:00	SW
Treasured as a word	31 Aug 2018 at 12:57:02	SW	31 Aug 2018 at 12:57:39	SW

## Appendix 8: Screen Grabs of NVIVO showing themes and codes

Image 1 – showing top line themes with the most references

Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created...	Modified On	Modified By	Color
Materiality	11	143	11 Jul 2019 at 13:47	SW	Today, 13:08	SW	
Clothing and Emotion	11	138	4 Sep 2018 at 13:59	SW	Today, 13:06	SW	
Shopping	11	83	31 Aug 2018 at 10:28	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 13:57	SW	
Cost and Value	11	72	31 Aug 2018 at 10:36	SW	Today, 13:14	SW	
Identity	11	60	25 Oct 2018 at 16:28	SW	Today, 13:06	SW	
Wearing Treasured Garm...	11	60	11 Jul 2019 at 14:01	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 14:03	SW	
Divestment	11	59	11 Jul 2019 at 13:56	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 14:00	SW	

Image 2 – Showing the nodes within the 'Clothing and Emotion' Theme

Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created...	Modified On	Modified By	Color
▼ Clothing and Emotion	11	138	4 Sep 2018 at 13:59	SW	Today, 13:06	SW	
Love	8	36	31 Aug 2018 at 10:32	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 12:22	SW	
Clothes and Memory	11	33	4 Sep 2018 at 12:42	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:42	SW	
Comfort	10	17	31 Aug 2018 at 12:53	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:48	SW	
Desire and Longing	6	10	4 Sep 2018 at 14:00	SW	24 Oct 2018 at 16:...	SW	

Image 3 – Showing the nodes within the 'Identity' theme

▼ Identity	11	79	25 Oct 2018 at 16:28	SW	Today, 13:06	SW
▶ Connection to Others	10	42	4 Sep 2018 at 13:54	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 14:01	SW
Life Transition	5	13	5 Sep 2018 at 11:48	SW	25 Oct 2018 at 13:44	SW
Narrative	6	13	22 Oct 2018 at 09:...	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:42	SW
Aging	5	5	4 Sep 2018 at 14:31	SW	25 Oct 2018 at 15:48	SW

Image 4 – Showing the nodes within the 'Materiality' theme

▼ Materiality	11	143	11 Jul 2019 at 13:47	SW	Today, 13:08	SW
Storage and Display	10	29	4 Sep 2018 at 14:11	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 13:52	SW
▶ Material Betrayal	9	26	4 Sep 2018 at 12:28	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:29	SW
Care and Washing	10	25	4 Sep 2018 at 12:32	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:52	SW
Fit	5	20	4 Sep 2018 at 14:01	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:43	SW
Physical or asethetic b...	10	18	4 Sep 2018 at 14:23	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:41	SW
Uniqueness	5	8	4 Sep 2018 at 14:20	SW	25 Oct 2018 at 14:34	SW
Replacibility	4	6	5 Sep 2018 at 11:19	SW	22 Oct 2018 at 19:48	SW
Interaction with Garme...	4	4	4 Sep 2018 at 13:56	SW	22 Oct 2018 at 19:50	SW
Knowledge about garm...	3	4	22 Oct 2018 at 09:...	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 13:48	SW
Alterations to Garment	2	2	4 Sep 2018 at 14:04	SW	22 Oct 2018 at 15:54	SW

Image 5 – Showing the nodes within shopping to group participants attitudes to shopping and acquisition

▼ Shopping	11	83	31 Aug 2018 at 10:28	SW	11 Jul 2019 at 13:57	SW
Charity Shops	6	20	31 Aug 2018 at 10:29	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:40	SW
Attitude to buying clot...	7	15	4 Sep 2018 at 12:27	SW	25 Oct 2018 at 15:53	SW
Brands	6	15	31 Aug 2018 at 11:25	SW	25 Oct 2018 at 13:11	SW
Online Shopping	5	10	31 Aug 2018 at 10:31	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:06	SW
High Street Shops	3	4	31 Aug 2018 at 10:31	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:25	SW

Image 6 – Showing the nodes that appeared under cost and value used for Acquisition theme

▼ Cost and Value	11	72	31 Aug 2018 at 10:36	SW	Today, 13:14	SW
Gift	7	19	4 Sep 2018 at 14:35	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:32	SW
Getting a Bargain	5	8	4 Sep 2018 at 14:19	SW	26 Oct 2018 at 11:41	SW

## Appendix 9 – New Garment Analysis Checklists

### Photographs to take

1. Whole garment flat
2. Whole garment hung
3. Close up of the pattern or print
4. Labels
5. Any damage – marks, holes etc

### Checklist for Observation

Initial Observations	Notes
Garment type - T-Shirt/ Skirt etc	
Male/ Female/ Unisex	
Fabric Composition	
Main Colour/ Pattern	
Write a short description of the garment	
<b>Key Features</b>	
Is there a pattern or print, describe it, how was it achieved (screen print/ embroidery/ printed on to plain fabric)	
Detail the fastenings and their location	
Detail the pockets, their type and location.	
Detail any attached decoration and their location	

Are there any notable features in the construction or is the garment reinforced in any way such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements?	
Describe the lining, is the lining fabric different from the main fabric?	
<b>Labels</b>	
List and describe the labels found in the garment	
<b>Use, Alteration and Wear</b>	
Has the garment been structurally altered in any way?	
Where does the garment show wear?	
Is the garment spoiled or damaged in any way? Describe any elements of damage (holes, split seams, stains etc)	
Has the colour faded or fabric thinned?	
Has the garment been dyed to alter its original colour?	
<b>Garments and the Senses</b>	
Describe how the garment feels to touch, is this how you expected it to feel? Is it heavy or light? Rough or smooth?	
Does the garment smell?	

Does the garment make a noise? Would it make a noise if worn?	
<b>Dating</b>	
What decade does the garment belong to?	
Does it look typical of fashions from that time?	
<b>Owner</b>	
Did the owner acquire it new or 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand	
Does the owner own similar items? Does the garment fit in with their style?	
Does the owner have ephemera associated with the garment? Photographs? Indication of original price? Original tags or packaging?	

### Checklist for Reflection

Personal Reactions	Notes
Would the garment fit you? How might it feel to wear? Tight/ loose? Comfortable/ uncomfortable	
Would you wear this garment if you could?	
What kind of person do you think would wear this garment?	

Do you have an emotional reaction to the garment?	
<b>Research</b>	
What information is there on this category of garment (T-shirts, jeans, wedding dresses), does it have any culturally specific meanings?	
Are there similar items in museum collections, books or magazines?	
Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) for sale on Etsy, Ebay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites? If so note the prices and similarities	
Is the maker of the garment a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an	

autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?	
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## **Appendix 10: Interview Transcripts**

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### **10.1: Bart Interview Transcript**

SW: Can you just confirm that you have read and understood the participant information sheet and signed the consent form?

B: Yes

SW: And can you just state your name?

B: Bart [surname redacted]

SW: And Bart, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

B: So, um, I was going to tell you my real age but I think I might not say! [Laughs]

SW: [Laughs]

B: Official age is, I'm 35, [smiles] no, I'm 39, so I've been here for 18 years [smiles] I come from Poland, I came here in 2000, um, I've done two degrees here and I'm working now for a environmental and social conservation association [nods].

SW: Ok, great and umm, how do you feel about clothes and fashion in general?

B: Sooo, Ummm, I've got a really weird relationship with this stuff because I like the good stuff, but I never have the patience for it and sometimes I've got periods of having a self-perceived sense of fashion and sometimes it's complete zero, especially when I was at university, you know how it is? A pair of...well, maybe not in a fashion degree [gestures towards SW], a pair of trousers and two t-shirts and that's all you live off, but I did have a period of where I was getting in debt to get some cool clothes and I thought I was actually pretty, not then, but from the perspective of time, oh you know? I was actually quite cool [said quietly, almost sheepishly].

SW: So what were the differences between when you were really into fashion and not so into fashion, why was that?

B: Um, maybe to be 'into fashion' is the wrong statement, fashion for me was always associated with a huge expense. I was more into looking for my own identity and style, that was fashion for me. Of course I had to borrow from whatever the trend was around, but I was always very non-conformistic (sic). I always desperately avoided looking like other people, even though I really wanted, because it's cool.

SW: Yeah,

B: I think I'm more conformist now.

SW: Mmm, and so how would you describe your style now?

B: Oh, I don't know. I'll tell you why because, right now, I spend most of my time, working in casual clothes, casual, smart clothes in a office, and the second part of my life in shorts cycling, cause I cycle everywhere...

SW: Oh yeah, me too, I like, leggings...constantly.

B: Yes, it's like most of my...and I do gym.

SW: Yeah.

B: Fitness is like religion for me so most of my clothes are like, fitness clothes.

SW: [Laughs] Yeah.

B: So when I do have to go out, I do have some stuff and, [leans back, thinks] I don't know I try to be a more than, a little bit more, kind of army side, not trendy. I admire people who are trendy, but I could not be like this. I love the whole hipster movement and stuff, the way they look, but, it just doesn't work for me. I would not be able to replicate it.

SW: Mmm, so how often do you purchase clothing? I know we discussed gym clothing/fitness. So how often do you purchase clothing would you say?

B: I'm trying to erm, get something I really like and just keep it for long time, so I collect, accumulate, so not very often.

SW: Yeah. So would you say your shopping style was buying more expensive, but better quality things or buying cheaper things more often?

B: Um, I think somewhere in the middle.

SW: Mmmhmm, and what shops do you normally go to when you shop?

B: Um, so I think the reason for buying cheaper more often is um, that clothes start smelling?

SW: Right, ok?

B: I don't know if it's me...or my lack of skills in how to wash it, but there's no t-shirt, it doesn't matter how expensive it is, it's going to start eventually.

SW: Mmm, yeah.

B: Just, rank! And, jumpers like this, [pulls at his jumper] twice washed and rubbish, doesn't matter how much they cost, so if I go for the cheap ones I quite Uniqlo, the mid-range [shrugs]. I don't wanna sound really cheap but for me the mid-range is like Penguin or Levis.

SW: Yeah, no, it is!

B: And expensive ones, I really like umm, err, gosh, what it is it, I can't even remember, it's an English brand, um, Ted Baker, no, um, yes Ted Baker [smiles]. I really like Ted Baker. I'm trying to fit into that style. I just really love the colours.

SW: Mmm, yeah.

B: And the combination of colours.

SW: So it's kind of classic but with...

B: With the detail.

SW: Yeah, little colorful details or extra little bits in bright colours or there's just something slightly different about it but not too different.

B: Yeah.

SW: Yeah.

B: Just about right.

SW: OK, great. So how easy or difficult do you find to throw your clothes away?

B: Um.

SW: I know you just said you had a big clear out?

B: Usually quite difficult, especially the ones that you like and you don't fit anymore, you know, I'm one of those people who always believe...

SW: Yeah?

B: ...there will be a miracle.

SW: One day...

B: [Laughs] I don't have a problem with weigh [Laughs] but um, but yeah I do tend to keep sometimes clothes, I know that are just, are just...I just threw away um, an Alexander McQueen jumper. I just barely fitted it and just lost quite a lot of weight and was like oo it fits! And then I realized there was a hole in here [gestures towards top of chest].

SW: Oh no!

B: I think it still might be in there... [laughs]

SW: And, um, how do you feel when you throw things away or get rid of your clothes?

B: Um, in a way, um, I'm losing something nice. On the other hand, a certain memory is just gone, good or bad, good always stays but the bad, you know, um, and yeah and a big clear out and then you've got space for more, new ones. [smiles].

SW: This is true. I desperately, I can't, I literally can't fit anymore clothes in the wardrobe, and especially doing this project as well, I just think, oh god, throw it away, just get rid of it, um, so er...Can you show me your treasured garment?

B: Um, umm hmmm, the actual physical one, yeah?

SW: Yeah.

B: [Gets up and walks out of the room]

B: They are not really treasured for any specific reason. I mean, there is a reason, but ummm [goes and gets his clothes]

B: And, um, can you help me a little bit? How do you define treasured?

S: Well...

B: Treasured, treasured garment...

S: So, when I thought about it, I thought that it would be like, the garment you saved from a fire, like, if you could grab one thing.

B: Yeah.

S: It would be that that you'd grab, and it doesn't even have to be for any particular reason because part of the research was to see whether it was...how, how things were being valued.

B: Yeah.

S: Whether people treasured things because it was the most expensive thing they owned or because they'd worn it somewhere or because they looked really great in it or because it had memories attached to it so there were all these different levels and ways you could...or because it was a really great fashion item, maybe It's by a designer who you really love even if you can't wear it, and also if people wore it... or didn't wear it because you had things you didn't wear but I thought maybe some people might wear theirs all the time because they loved it so much, so it was really to understand all those different elements, so it can be...

B: It's good because it's a bunch of clothes that are like, for completely different reasons.

S: Oh, ok great.

B: Do you want me to tell you about them?

S: Yeah, just tell me about them, one by one.

B: So first of them is a scarf, [holds up scarf]. So I never wore this scarf, never ever in my life, but it's, erm, it's the last gift that my dad gave me before he sadly passed away, and, it was kind of weird because, it's not really like, my Dad wasn't like a close person or anything and he just give me scarf and it was kind of very different, and I'm always going to keep it...and, I don't even know how to wear it [puts it on]. It's weird, but um, I'm always going to keep it because it's ah, because it's the last gift. So that's very emotional, you know, connection I've got. The other thing is this [picks up flat cap], a Ted Baker cap [puts on the cap]. I don't think it suits me anymore but um, I told you about that 70s shirt I have...

S: Umm hmmm,

B: So, I pull of that look with army boots, those really nice tight, 'baklar' jeans, 70s, proper polyester vintage, and this, and...I love that look!

S: Yeah, where did you wear that look, did you...where did you wear it?

B: Um, clubbing or like parties, cool, special occasions...

S: Yeah,

B: Cause I'm not very courageous you know, I'm [takes hat off] I'm blending in, usually, in normal life. [nods]

S: And did you feel that you stood out in that outfit?

B: I just feel really like [nods head, makes impressed face] cool kid [laughs] Umm this is kind of a new thing [holds up jumper] and I don't know why I like it so much, maybe because it's erm...I bought it in Italy, it's erm, it's a brand that makes the...actually, um...uniforms, uniforms for um, the, for the army...

S: Ah, nice.

B: For the army that does the planes, what do you call it now? Airforce! [laughs] that's it, the Italian air force and um, I really love that military style and I never seen anything like this and it was quite expensive but then it, everything in Italy is fashion, expensive! [laughs]

S: So expensive in Italy! And so small! Like, all the sizes are so small in Italy.

B: Well, good for me [laughs] because oh shit, sorry, I need a plaster [his fingers bleeding] and um, and I bought it because I was going to meet somebody, you know, like um, I have a date, I like it so much because, as it happens...

S: Don't get blood on it.

B: [smiles] His father was a pilot, and he just got himself exactly the same one but in blue so we matched, both wearing the same things, it was just funny, sorry, I'm going to put a plaster on it.

S: Yeah, go and get a plaster.

B: Sorry,

S: That's Ok.

B: I just had to go and get a plaster, it's recording?

S: Yeah, it's still recording.

B: So my final garment, is...I always really wanted to have a nice, cool leather jacket and I spend like, a couple of thousand pounds buying different ones. And they were always like, unfitted for me, because I don't fit in the normal scales, like um, like 'M', 'S' and whatever because they all made for every person, and I've got really broad shoulder, and I've got lots of muscle so, if it's going to fit on my shoulder it's...the sleeves are like this [gestures to show that the sleeves would be far too long] it's, it's going to fit on my sleeves then it barely fits on my shoulders. So I kept buying leather jackets and they were always like too long sleeves, they weren't very expensive like two, three hundred pounds for a leather jacket is not too much, so I got this one in the end and [holds up jacket] and gave it to um, to fix the length of the, the length of the sleeves and I like it, it's a very decent, kind of motor cycle cool, timeless piece and it's Ted Baker as well, so it's my favourite brand.

S: Yeah.

B: Like, slightly more expensive.

S: Yeah, and where do you wear it?

B: I wear it casually, like um, weather permitting really, it's just, this sort of jacket, you can wear all the time, everywhere, and the leather, there's just something about leather that makes you feel really comfortable, when it's really cold it just makes you feel, like safe.

S: Yeah, yeah that's true.

B: I like wearing leather, I would wear, sorry, fur, like a rabbit or something, I know it's really unethical but...

S: I have a vintage real fur, it's so warm,

B: Yeah,

S: So warm.

B: It's just, nice to touch.

S: So soft!

B: I'm sorry animals, I love animals but... [smiles]

S: Yeah, it's terrible really, but um, so, ah when did you buy your leather jacket?

B: Um, this one, about 3 or 4 years ago.

S: And do you remember which shop you bought it from?

B: Um, it was Westfield, the Ted Baker store in Westfield, I got a student discount as well.

S: Oh great, so do you mind saying how much it was?

B: About £390.

S: That's ok isn't it for a leather jacket, and do you still wear it?

B: Yeah of course, yeah.

S: And how do you feel when you wear it?

B: Um, it makes me feel that I look, that I can fit in to every occasion, it's um, I do get, if I wear something really shit, I do really feel, really down, it does affect me, my mood, equally, if I wear something over the top I just don't feel comfortable and this one is just about right it's, it's you know, it's decent, it's quality, but it's not like, it's not loud.

S: Yeah, ok great, and er, what is the future for all of these items are you going to keep them indefinitely, do you plan on um, giving them away at any stage?

B: No, I'll probably keep them because they are wearable and decent.

S: All of them?



B: The scarf, for a different reason, the hat, I don't wear anymore I just love it, erm, this sort of leather jacket is going to last for years, um sweater, already 3 washes and it's already... [makes face] [as if to say it's already going bad/ won't last long]

S: In fact this jumper, is one of the only jumpers that just stays the same shape.

B: And where is it from, is it like a special brand or something?

S: It's, oh it's a really cheapy, it's an M&S super soft or 'cashmillion' like fake, fake cashmere, so it's polyester but it never needs ironing, it washes really well, it's really warm, it's great.

B: Well, M&S put a lot of care into what they're choosing even things like Next or something, they are like solid clothes.

S: Yeah, just lasts and lasts, um, so can you show me where these garments are stored, is that ok?

B: Um, yep, I need to pre-warn... [His partner is in the bedroom so he goes and tells him we are going in]

S: Yeah sure.

B: [calls through] O, we have to go in the room, can we come in, it's videoing.

O: I'll go out, yeah come in, it's a mess...

B: Sophie, it's a two boys room.

S: That's ok.

B: You know obviously it's going to be a mess...

S: Don't worry, it can't be worse than my room so...

B: Maybe that's true, but I think boys are messier.

S: I am a confirmed 'messy person', no this is very tidy...this is incredibly tidy.

B: [laughs] So I try to keep this one [red jumper] because it's got a really nice shape – [shows he has a metal hanger with space for trousers and hangs it up at the side of the wardrobe [wardrobe has other shirts etc in it.] Jacket as well, always trying to put a wooden hanger, just because it keeps the shape um, put this one on [does the popper up at the top, holds it up for the camera] classic, timeless, nice, and this [holds up scarf...throws it in the bottom of the wardrobe] no, [opens drawer underneath wardrobe] ah, this one is in my 'messy drawer' and this one as well [Ted Baker flat cap] I did wear it at some point but now [laughs, puts it on, looks in the

mirror] I just keep it somewhere, I'm trying to be organized but, you know [places hat on top of the rail of clothes], it's a mess.

S: So you're not that particular about where different things are stored?

B: Um in here [gestures towards wardrobe] I'm trying to... once in a blue moon I do put my business shirts on one side and my jackets on the other [laughs], but then, over the course of the time, it is becoming a mess. Oh, I'll show you something confidential, no of course not [smiles] but this [opens large double door to reveal shelves of folded t-shirts – some not so well folded] this is how it turns after a while....

S: [laughs]

B: You see what I mean? It's like this, everything's just alive! Trying to get out of this! And this, one day you do this [gestures towards neat stacks of folded t-shirts] but you know, it doesn't last very long...

S: Mmm, yeah,

B: Five minutes.

S: Same, always, always refolding my drawers.

B: And just...[throws something back in the cupboard]

S: And then you're looking for something and you're just like 'shut the door, shut the door' and then it's gone, I like, I'm jealous you've got a built in wardrobe though, that's good, we don't have that.

B: Oh no, it's really shit because you can't fit any thing.

S: It's shallow.

B: Yeah.

S: It is shallow.

B: What was this meant to be for?

S: Yeah, what is it for? Because, it's not really for clothes, but what else would go in there?

B: Yeah maybe, maybe books, that's kind of my, it seems...

S: Yeah.

B: It seems good for books because of the depth.

S: But why would there be a door, like behind a door.

B: I dunno, what do people read?

S: [laughs] Secret books!

B: Danielle Steele, you know, a secret collection, in the olden days, by the fireplace, you know that's how the babies were made! [laughs]

S: yeah [laughs] Ok, great, shall we go, actually, I need your leather jacket for the 2<sup>nd</sup> part. But then we can go back in the other room, thank you, I keep getting interiors tips from everyone's flats because it's laid out the same as ours, your fire place tiles are exactly the same...

B: As yours?

S: Ah huh, yeah.

B: Because I had my cousin called from Carlisle, she was just in love with it, she wanted to marry it,

S: Oh yeah you've got a real one, we've got a real one too,

B: For a time it was like this, you can buy it in the markets in Carlisle for very expensive this old Victorian tiling.

S: Was she about to chisel it off and take it with her?

B: [smiles] mmm.

S: Ok, so excellent, so can you tell me if there are garments that you wished you still had that would be your treasured garment if you still had them?

B: Yeah, so, that polyester shirt....

S: mmm hmm,

B: Do you want me to show it to you, as in, on a picture?

S: Yeah, yes please.

B: I'll find it [walks off camera to get ipad to find a picture], you know, honestly, I could happily keep it, I don't know why I threw it away.

O: (from off camera): Because I made you throw it away!

B: No you didn't!

Omar: That shirt are you talking about?

B: Yeah, it was amazing!

O: It was vile!

B: Don't listen to him.

O: Sorry!

S: [laughs]

B: And there's one jacket that I gave to someone and somebody lost it, so I would have liked to have kept that one if I have the chance...Ummm [looks through ipad] Actually, I bought it, the shirt, for the fancy dress party, it was 70s and then I just wore it.

S: And then you just wore it?

B: As the fashion because I thought it was super cool, I'm afraid we have very bad internet at home...[he needed the internet to access his photo storage]

S: Well our internet is always terrible, it just drops in and out, it's the worst internet ever, we've tried loads of other internet providers.

B: Yeah.

S: But still...

B: It's like a blind spot for services isn't it? We don't even have a television for terrestrial television.

S: Yeah, no, people are like, oh do you watch Netflix? And I'm like "What I'd give to be able to watch Netflix!" [laughs] our internet just won't have it.

B: Gosh sorry, I don't know where that picture is...I bought it for a 70s party but now I realize I actually haven't worn it there, oh maybe here [looks back at ipad for the picture] these are clubbing pictures most of them – like us, topless! [laughs] Good old days I say,

S: I know, I miss going out, I just can't do it though, I just feel so ill the next day.

B: The clubs are not the same, that's the thing...

S: Mmmhmm, that's true, a lot of them have closed, like the big clubs.

B: Like, there were so many amazing clubs, you could go out on a Tuesday evening and go from club to club, no, Thursday evening until Tuesday morning, and from one place to another, I remember there was this one club that was open...you know there is party, after party, after party, after party!

S: Yeah.

B: There was a tea party and it was open at 12 on a Sunday, 12 noon.

S: Mmmm,

B: And, sometimes it was 30 degrees outside, sunny, and you walk inside and there are 4 rooms full of people and the *best* music, the *best* clubbing experience ever, you could be completely sober, just drink water because, you know, it was 12 noon, you don't need any energizer, so I'm going sometimes after gym, and that was...

S: Oh really?

B: I loved it. [pauses, looks at photos again]

S: There was a club by Vauxhall, I used to do a lot of running, I don't anymore, I had an injury, but on Sunday mornings I used to go running, and there was a club that was just still on at 10am on a Sunday and then I'd come back a couple of hours later at midday on a Sunday and I'd be like, oh yeah, still going!

B: So that was 'Beyond' and Beyond...

S: Oh yeah, that one,

B: So the famous one was, umm 'Action' it was on Saturdays starting at 11 at night and it was on until 5am, Beyond was starting at 5am.

S: Aaaah.

B: Beyond was so good that people, I used to wake up at 4am in the morning, have breakfast...

S: [laughs] you set your alarm?

B: Yeah and go to club, and after Beyond you would go to 'Later'.

S: Right.

B: and after 'Later' there was a party called 'Open' on Sundays starting at 8pm.

S: So you could just do the whole day?

B: [nods] You could non-stop in the club.

S: Yeah.

B: And there were, I mean, mind blowing, the clubs, the lasers, the atmosphere, the people, the just, everything. [sighs]

B: I'm not having much luck with this sorry, and because it's the cloud it's quite slow. [referring to trying to find a picture on the ipad]

B: um, if it helps maybe I can find and send it to you later?

S: Yeah, um, yeah let's do that,

B: But I want to show you because that's, that's really what, of all my garments that was what was special, it had a designer [points to top left chest] little name here, so it was a proper designer piece.

S: Mmm.

B: I bought it for ten quid in Camden town,

S: Oh amazing!

B: Really nicely fitted, just very unique, yeah.

S: Mmmm When did you buy it?

B: Erm, 2005, I happen to know, because that's the first picture I have, that's the 70s party.

S: [laughs] Why is it, why is it more special than the other clothes that you showed me?

B: Because...ummm...because it's authentic, the polyester smells, you know, it makes you a bit like, white patches [draws a circle around the underarm], just like 70s, you know, it's real stuff and it's got that little signature of a designer so you know it's just, and the design was just cool, it's um, there was this woman with long hair, and at the front of this woman would be everything light and behind her everything dark

S: Ooooooh, I know what you mean!

B: With the stripes as well, I mean, a sense of 70s I think [makes diagonal stripes lines with his hand across his body]

S: Mmmm and what...oh you told me what you wore it with earlier didn't you – did you tell me what outfit you wore it with?

B: Yeah so, I put together my own outfit with it, so army boots, and kind of army style slim jeans from Bakla, very nicely fitted, very, you know, cool and um, the hat.

S: Oh, the hat, you showed me?

B: Yeah.

S: And, was it only worn on nights out?

B: Sorry?

S: Was it only worn on nights out?

B: Yeah, um, visiting people, I think it was a bit too cool! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

B: I just wear it umm, err, I might have found it [gone back to looking at ipad] it's very slow, its awful...I know what I should do, I should try to tether it to my phone [meaning the ipad, gets out phone] [mutters to his phone/ ipad]

S: That's genuinely what I spend my whole day doing, watching things being like 'erm, something's not loaded, turn router on and off' [sighs]

B: [continues looking at his ipad]

S: Do you have any particular memories associated with wearing the shirt or having the shirt?

B: Erm, no, I do have a, you know those jeans that went with it, I do have a memory with those, but it's very personal and I can't tell you [shakes head], it's just very personal. [smiles, back to looking at ipad]

S: Ok,

B: Sorry [keeps looking for the photo]

S: That's Ok.

B: No, I think, I think it would be best if I just email you a selection of pictures,

S: Yeah, send me the, send me the picture that would be really helpful it would be really, it would be really good.

B: [inaudible]

S: Yeah we'd just be waiting for the internet to load...So how do you feel now you don't have the garment? Do you wish you could go back and keep it or...

B: Yeah, especially the polyester shirt because I would fit into it. The trousers there's no fucking chance because they're a 28, hello? Who fits in a 28?

S: Oh yeah. [laughs]

B: I did, but good old days, not anymore, but yeah shirts, I would because this shirt is so beautiful, I would just, put it in a frame.

S: Mmmm, but your partner doesn't agree that the shirt was beautiful?

B: But he's, he's bringing really good style, I've got my own, and sometimes you just want to be you, but he, he's amazing, he doesn't dress up, especially now, but he had fantastic style, he was an icon [nods], I guess it's going with age, you just don't care.

S: Mmm yeah, I found that...

B: Can I ask how old you are?

S: I'm thirty...thirty one, I'm thirty one.

B: No! Wow!

S: Why did you think I was older?

B: No! Much younger!

S: Oh! Thankyou.

B: I think we are both doing quite well, because you wouldn't guess I am 39?

S: No, no, never, never ever, maybe it's that generation that refuses to get 'old old'.

B: [shrugs] I'm lucky with the genes I guess.

S: Mmm.

B: Plus I do sports all the time and eat healthy food and all that.

S: Yeah, what sports do you do?

B: I do gym, I'm a personal trainer actually, qualified, never worked as such.



S: Yeah.

B: Run, cycle, all the time, I mean I do have to have a physical effort every single day otherwise I'm not happy.

S: Yeah.

B: So that keeps me in shape and my food is like, I mean, my lunch is a bowl of raw vegetables, literally, there is nothing else, I just got used to it, add a bit of fat on maybe, no dressing, nothing, every day I've got like that much [makes gesture with hands].

S: Yeah, that much vegetables...

B: What else can I tell you?

S: I think I'm done with er, questions, oh, when did your...erm, when did your 70s shirt, when did it become thought of as treasured or special? When did you decide?

B: So I thought of it as er, quirky item for the 70s party, but I started looking at it and just, it had the signature of the design, and like, and I tried it with the different things, and it was really nicely fitted as well, so I think this is when, I was like Ok, I can make something up, let's just mix 70s with current like, so, this is when I thought, it's really nice, and it's so original, I could put an afro wig with it and I would just be like straight from that era.

S: Yeah, ok great, thank you very much.

-----ENDS-----

## 10.2 Mark Interview Transcript

S: Oh and just to note, look at me, don't look at the camera, I'm sure you know that!  
[laughs]

M: I had media training recently so a lot of er...

S: Ah, so you know all about it.

M: I had my TV debut, er, in Movember last year.

S: Oh, cool.

M: On London Live, on the Evening Standard's TV show that I didn't realize was a thing.

S: Yeah.

M: Yeah, that was quite good fun.

S: Can you just confirm that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and signed the consent form?

M: I can confirm that I have read the participation information sheet and signed the consent form.

S: Thank you very much.

S: And, can you tell me a bit about yourself?

M: I can, yeah, my name is Mark, er, I've lived in London for nearly 8 years so September [2018] will be 8 years, and I'm from Ipswich, well a little place called Woodbridge outside Ipswich originally, erm, so I moved down here sort of when I was in my mid 20s to work for a charity, so Diabetes UK, erm, so my background is that I've worked in charities now for about 12 or 13 years and, ah, I originally worked for a children's hospice back in Suffolk which was really lovely erm yeah...

S: Making myself at home. [I'd moved position off camera]

M: [laughs] Comfy! Erm, yeah I worked for children's hospice, which was really lovely because they were building a new hospice in Ipswich so I was the main fundraiser for that.

S: Mmhm,

M: It was really nice, and then, when I moved to London I erm, worked for Diabetes UK, as a fundraiser, more events stuff, I was there for 5 years which was a bit mad,

and then I now work for Movember, in a similar kind of role as a fundraiser for them, as a fundraiser for Movember every year so, yeah I don't what more you, what sort of stuff you want to know about me?

S: Um, what do you do in your spare time? Family? Friends? Marital status? I've got [written] down here.

M: Erm Ok, so...Single, marital status single, so a lot of the time I spend, erm, I swim quite a lot, er, I love swimming outside, anything to do with the Lido in London is the closest you can get.

S: Aren't they cold?

M: No they're heated! So the two I go to is Charlton and London Fields and they're both heated, so when you first get in...

S: How heated?

M: Enough! So when you first get in you're still a bit like, [exhales sharply, shrugs shoulders] but once you're in you're great its lovely, so when it was snowing so L, who I live with...

S: Yeah,

M: He loves it as well, so we'd cycle up to London Fields like Tuesday morning at like 6:30am erm, or go to Charlton on a Sunday and there's something about swimming in the snow, so when we went up to Charlton there was a blizzard, but then you're swimming, outside, in a heated pool, and it's like that feeling of the snow hitting your head or your arm or back or something...

S: Yeah,

M: As you're swimming in something warm it's just, the greatest feeling, there's something so perfectly natural about it which makes you feel really lovely, but in the summer, when it's a little bit warmer, I go out and I swim round the country in lakes and rivers and things and just kind of jump off waterfalls and things. That's my favourite thing to do, so I spend most of my time outside, camping. I'm going camping this weekend, hiking, building, chopping down stuff and building fires and things, that's where I feel most at home, which is weird then living in central London [laughs]

S: Yeah. [laughs]

M: Where I can't easily do anything that I really love erm, about life, erm, but I also spend a lot of time with my sister, my sister lives up in Victoria Park, she just bought a...she got married last year, she bought a flat with her husband and every Monday

I'll spend with them and we'll play, you'll see [gestures out of shot] we've got some geeky board games.

S: Oh yeah.

M: Spend a lot of time playing very nerdy board games, erm, we went to the Science museum last night, they've got an exhibition, probably not an exhibition, it's an interactive one.

S: Yeah,

M: So they've got 180 retro computer games and consoles.

S: Oh cool! What, I didn't know about that, so exciting!

M: So me and V [his sister] went last night and erm, they've got...we spent most of the time playing Goldeneye on the N64, Lemmings, Worms...

S: What? They're all the best games!

M: Yeah, I mean literally, they've got 180 games and you just walk around and play them all, it is so much fun!

S: Does that count as an 'exhibition'? [laughs]

M: I don't know what you'd call it? It's called power on or power up or something.

S: I suppose like kids, kids today, if you were like 10 now you'd be like, 'Lemmings' what is this?

M: Do you know what?

S: Lemmings was my favourite game.

M: It is such a slow game!

S: Really?

M: It is so much fun, but you sit there going [mimics pressing a button and then waiting] and then 10 minutes later you have to do something else.

S: [laughs]

M: Such a slow...same with Worms.

S: Yeah?

M: The amount of time it takes to have your go, and to load and to move.

S: Yeah,

M: Takes so long but they are still some the best games.

S: Yeah,

M: Ever made!

S: I suppose you don't realize when you're like...cause my Granddad had it on his computer, I suppose you don't realize when you're 10...and you're like this is it, this is the game and it's great, and now you've got smartphones.

M: Yeah, they had all this, they had a Disney section, they had a Mario section, they had the first Mario on the NES.

S: Oh Yeah.

M: And then they had the most up to date one which is on the, the Switch I think its called? It's a new Nintendo thing where it's like that [holds iphone horizontally] and its got 2 little joypads on it.

S: Oh I've seen that on adverts.

M: And they come off and you put it in a thing and it's on the tele the same thing.

S: Ahhhh,

M: And that's the new one, its really weird cause you're holding these 2 things like this, [gestures using both arms]

S: Yeah,

M: It's very odd, they had virtual reality there, they had air guitar, aw it's so much fun it's like £12, yeah.

S: That does...I'm gonna go that sounds great.

M: You should.

S: Um, ok, how do you feel about clothes and fashion, after all that. [laughs]

M: Ok, how do I feel about clothes and fashion, I'm very functional when it comes to clothes, I'm not, I don't follow fashions at all, I don't um, I don't much care for fashions in any way, I don't read any magazines and look at things and think ah, that looks good, that looks good, what I find I've spent years trying to find the one pair of

jeans and the one perfect t-shirt and the one perfect pair of boxer shorts [laughs] and the one perfect jumper so I just buy like 5!

S: [laughs] Then get all of them?

M: Then that'll last me a couple of years and then I'll do it again.

S: So then you re-start the search?

M: Exactly! So what was really annoying recently is because I'm quite tall, 6 foot 4.

S: You are quite tall.

M: Yeah, so I really struggle with, I'm not, I'm not very big [puts arms out to indicate wide] I'm just quite tall and average so mediums are too short, but they're the perfect size [gestures across his shoulders] and larges are the perfect length but they're too wide.

S: Oh

M: So I really struggle to find the perfect t-shirt, when I found it, it was, um, American Apparel.

S: Oh, yeah.

M: Their jersey t-shirts, I think this is one [un- zips hoody to reveal t-shirt] and then they closed down. [shrugs shoulders]

S: Yeah.

M: And now American Apparel...

S: They've gone bust haven't they?

M: And now I can't get the perfect t-shirt, but you can buy them online...in America!

S: [laughs] So going to go to America?

M: I'm going to America just to buy T-shirts, erm, and then Levis are the perfect jeans, but then I bought the wrong ones recently and I'm really angry cause they're just a bit too baggy, and I just feel a bit uncomfortable, these ones ripped, so I've had to put a really weird patch on them.

S: Oh ripped jeans are really trendy right though?

M: These ripped in just the wrong place, and because I'm going away and I need these jeans to not fall apart I thought, patch it up, and that's, that's coming off already, it's shit.

S: How have you patched it, did you sew it?

M: It's an iron [on] patch.

S: Oh, yeah, I had those when I was a teenager.

M: Yeah, um, but, these are not jeans I would wear outside now with a knee patch.

S: Mmm.

M: Because it would look stupid, but yeah, I'm very functional with my clothing I've got, like, the one pair of good trainers, I've got the one pair of boots and the one good, a couple of good coats and stuff so, um, I'm very functional about it, I then, what I love about that is, then I don't get any kind of emotional attachment to any of my clothes because it's just like well, it's the perfect t-shirt, if I, I know where to get it from now.

S: Yeah.

M: If I lose it or it breaks or anything then I'll get rid of it.

S: And it's only when you need to buy another one?

M: Yeah.

S: That you just, go buy another and it's then replaced, so...

M: Yeah, exactly, I'll just buy it online, I don't have to...I hate, I hate shopping, like going to a shop, trying stuff on, thinking, I hate the idea of thinking if it looks...I want it to look right, I don't really care if it looks good if that makes sense...like I want a pair of jeans that fit right.

S: Yeah.

M: I don't really care how they look in terms of fashion, I just care that they fit me right.

S: Right, Ok.

M: Does this look good? Oh no, sorry, does it look right, yeah, I don't really care about the if it's the right colour if it's the right this, if it's the right that, I just want it to fit right and I can wear it and be comfortable in it, so that's kind of my relationship with clothes. [laughs]

S: So what kind of colours do you go for, I imagine...yeah, what kind of colours do you go for like with your jeans and with your t-shirts and things?

M: Erm [smiles] I got it in my head that I needed 4 pairs of jeans.

S: Right.

M: A black pair.

S: Yeah.

M: Dark blue pair.

S: Yup.

M: A light blue pair.

S: Yup.

M: And a grey pair.

S: Ok.

M: So that's what I own, and they're all Levis, so I thought they were all the Levis 511,

S: Mmhm

M: Five one one, and then, I got these dark blue ones about 2 weeks ago, and they were perfect dark blue and they just fit really awkwardly, they were a bit too long, a bit too baggy and I realized, it's not 511, its 522, that I should have got.

S: Ahhh

M: So these ones [slaps his leg] are the perfect jeans, and they're 522, so I was like, I can't take them back now so I've got, like, this pair of jeans that are too big, so I'm going to try and like, tumble dry them so they shrink down a little bit. [laughs]

S [laughs] yeah...or get a new pair?

M: [laughs] Yeah but they're like £80, that's the other thing, I don't wanna spend, I hate spending money on clothes, so none of my disposable income goes on clothes really, it's only when I need something I buy something.

S: Yeah



M: I never buy something for the sake of it really, erm, so, yeah spend another £80 on a pair of jeans, I'm a bit like, I'd never do that, I'll just wear these ones now.

S: Just wear them even though they're not right?

M: I mean, they probably look fine but...

S: Yeah.

M: I think being in London as well, I work in Farringdon so it's very trendy round there,

S: Yeah.

M: There's lots of creative, fashion places so I think without even wanting to, you are constantly thinking about what you're wearing.

S: Mmm.

M: The cut of jeans and the cut of the jumper and the length of this and the quality of that.

S: Yeah.

M: And you do end up looking at it and going 'they're a bit shorter and nicer, should mine be a bit shorter and tidier' and I don't wanna think like that, that's not, that's not what I'm about!

S: [laughs]

M: You end up...obviously you do, because you're surrounded by it, if you lived in the country, you wouldn't ever think about it, you'd just buy a pair of jeans and that would be it, no one would care.

S: Yeah, people look very different in the country.

M: They look very different.

S: In the Cotswolds, whenever I go there, I'm just like, I can tell I stand out like a sore thumb like.

M: Really.

S: I don't even think I dress particularly 'urban'.

M: [laughs]

S: But you get out in...where does my husband's sister work,,,Chipping Camden or Chipping Norton, you get out there and like oh, Adidas shell toe trainers are not the right footwear! Not the right footwear for here.

M: [laughs]

S: And I'm not wearing a gilet.

M: There's still a lot of bootcut jeans I've found, well I'm from Suffolk, there's still quite a lot of bootcut there...

S: Really?

M: I've got another pair of black jeans that I got from Uniqlo about 10 years ago that I still wear, because they haven't got a hole in and they haven't ripped, and I was with someone the other day and they were like "Why are you wearing bootcut jeans!"

S: [laughs]

M: And I was like "I'm not! I'm not am I?" And I was looking at them like [gestures to hem of his jeans] going oh my god they're really wide this is horrible! So I just got home and immediately threw them away.

S: Aww.

M: But yeah, I hate the fact I did that, but...

S: Yeah.

M: Something in, I think about being in the city, you do think about that kind of thing a lot more...

S: Yeah,

M: Than you would care for, you're just generally thinking about what you're wearing and how you look more than you would anywhere else, which I find annoying.

S: Yeah.

M: But, it is what it is.

S: This is true, I think you've covered a little bit of it but it's about, yeah, how often do you purchase clothing? Um, and where from? And, how expensive? What is the general price point?

M: Ok yes, um so I'm 33 now, and I went through this very exciting transition about 3 years ago where you go from I just wanna buy, I wanna buy clothes, well I did anyway, I wanna buy clothes because they're cheap and they kind of fit...

S: Mm,

M: To actually, I'm going to spend a little bit more, on something that's a bit better quality, that will last me a bit longer,

S: Mmhm,

M: So instead of like, 5 years ago I would have bought a pair of boots from a shop in Camden,

S: Mm,

M: I've now bought, I've just spent £150 on a nice pair of DMs.

S: Oh?

M: Yeah, which is very exciting, um, so it was like, I've kind of moved from that, ah I've got 30 quid to spend, to actually, I want that one pair that's really expensive that will last. And you know how, just some things, if you spend more on, it doesn't mean anything?

S: Yeah,

M: But you know things like Levis, DMs [Dr Martens] that kind of thing, if you spend more you're getting a better quality thing so.

S: Yeah.

M: I've kind of gone through that bit at the moment and it kind of goes hand in hand with that idea of just having the one perfect pair of jeans and the one style of jumper, I kind of, wouldn't spend anything on it but if I found that one jumper that I loved, that fit me perfectly, and if it was £60, that wouldn't bother me at all. If it was, probably over £100, I wouldn't buy it, so, yeah, I very rarely, so course I got...I hate shopping, I hate going to the shops, I hate 'browsing'.

S: Yeah.

M: Cause there's just too much.

S: I love browsing.

M: Yeah, see I, so I went, I went somewhere and I needed a jumper, cause one got a hole in it and I needed a jumper so I went to H&M in Angel and I just stand there and was like [shrugs shoulders] I'm just gonna leave! [laughs]

S: So you just walked and then were like 'no'?

M: What I want is to take somebody with me.

S: Yeah,

M: And them just to tell me, that's my ideal situation.

S: Yes.

M: For me to just walk into a shop and someone to go right, this will look good, this will look good, that will look good, put them on, see if they fit.

S: Yeah,

M: And go, that's what I need.

S: Yeah,

M: I know that I should give a bit more care about what I wear and how I wear it but I don't so it's as long someone says that's fine, if you said to me that top suits you I'd buy 10 of them.

S: [laughs]

M: [laughs] Straight away, go fine, that suits me, I'm just gonna wear that all the time.

S: Just gonna wear it constantly? I used to do that for some of my male friends they'd be like "Come shopping with me" and it's so fun you're just like this, this, this, this.

M: Yeah, and they're things I'd never have thought about.

S: Yeah,

M: Cause I would never have gone, oh yeah I'll try that on, I tend to wear just, very plain colours as well,

S: Mm.

M: So, um, I got, most my wardrobe is just like black, grey, dark blue, that's kind of it, I can't think of any colours I have actually [pauses] I can't think of anything

that's...I've got like a red checkered like shirt jacket thing, but apart from that I just stick with this [gestures to his clothes which is black slim leg jeans and a grey zip up hoody] pretty monochrome type stuff.

S: Yeah

M: Um, price point, very middle, mid range, like I've moved away from the H&M basics.

S: Yeah, moved up a level?

M: I've moved up a level, but I look for quality now which is good, so I wouldn't spend a lot of money on something because it's a brand but I would research it and make sure I'm getting something that's, that's I know because I'm spending more it is better,

S: Yeah

M: Like just because it's, I'm gonna show my ignorance now, just cause it's Diesel...

S: Mm,

M: Compared to Uniqlo, it doesn't mean, and Diesel's 150 quid it doesn't mean it's actually better quality,

S: Yeah,

M: So I'd always make sure I'm getting the best quality for, and I don't mind spending more for quality rather than just, I'd never buy anything from a brand, I'd never buy anything because it was this person or that person, I'd just buy it because it was the best of it's kind, which is, we're now coming to my item...

S: Yeah,

M: You'll see, you'll kind of see why, erm, I also, because of my height and size, I hate shopping online.

S: Yeah,

M: Because I always have to buy a medium and a large, because mediums might fit perfectly and large...and I'm not, I'm not a medium and I'm not a large so I always have to buy and medium and a large, and I hate doing that.

S: Yeah, then you have to send something back?

M: And then you have to send something back and I hate doing that so it's like, that's why I hardly ever go shopping like, I rarely, I just, never go.

S: Yeah.

M: I buy something once every 3 or 4 months I think and only when I definitely needed it.

S: Right.

M: I've convinced myself and gone, I definitely need to do this now, or...

S: So when something's broken or, if you've suddenly got...

M: Yeah, or if someone says to me "That's a bit weird" [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: "What's that for?" Ok bin! Get something else! [laughs] Straight away, I don't even question it, ok fine, get rid of that.

S: Aw.

M: I had a shirt once that I wore and someone was like "that's a bit..." think it was bit, a slightly weird shape or something?

S: Yeah.

M: It was quite boxy and a bit short.

S: Oh no.

M: And they were like, "It doesn't really suit you that" and I was like "ok fine" take it off immediately and throw it away [laughs] go and get something else.

S: Aw.

M: No it's fine, I like that, I like the idea of just owning something until someone says otherwise, it's quite a fun way to have clothes [laughs]

S: God if I did that I wouldn't have any clothes left!

M: Really?

S: Yeah, I've got, I wear less jazzy things now, but I've got like a wardrobe full of ...it's cause I worked in fashion and there were sample sales.

M: Yeah,

S: and I ran vintage fairs,

M: Oh wow,

S: And there were sample sales, you just given things, you get things for cheap so I've just accrued this mass of bonkers items that I'd never, I'd never buy them full price like, they're ridiculous, you'd wear them once but suddenly like last week we went to Blade Runner at Secret Cinema, Blade Runner.

M: Oh was it good?

S: Yeah, it was awesome, it was so good.

M: And I bet you had an outfit ready?

S: Exactly!

M: [laughs]

S: I was like, "What have I got" I didn't need to buy anything from the website.

M: That's amazing.

S: I just had a rummage.

M: My ex used to do that she, like you could go to any kind of fancy dress,

S: Yeah,

M: And she would be able to make an outfit,

S: Mmhm yup,

M: To suit that, just on her, that's amazing, that's an amazing thing to be able to do.

S: Yeah, takes up a lot of space though,

M: Yeah, does take up a lot of space.

S: Of things you hardly ever wear,

M: That's the thing, I hate thinking about what to wear as well,

S: Yeah,

M: So, I just want to be able to wake up and whatever I put on...

S: Mm,

M: It will match, and it will fit.

S: Yeah,

M: That's it, I hate thinking about 'Oh, what shall I wear today', it stresses me out. So I just like to have, put on and go.

S: Yeah,

M: So...

S: So we've covered it a little bit but how easy or difficult do you find it to throw clothes away?

M: Er, now, really easy.

S: Yeah,

M: So, I'm moving away for a few months, did I say this the last time you came round?

S: Yes,

M: Think I did a little bit, yeah, so I've got 2 weeks and then I'm going, so I've actually been going through [his clothes] because I'm...L and M [housemates] are going to stay in here.

S: Mmhm,

M: Cause everything is mine,

S: Yeah,

M: But, I've kind of gone through all my clothes and I've been throwing stuff away and it's been a really therapeutic thing to do.

S: Mmm,

M: Because it's like 'why have I got this?' why, I haven't worn this for like a year, why do I have it? So I think I find it very easy, like, it doesn't bother me at all, there's a few pieces I've got which are [pauses] mainly like t-shirts I've got, and I've had for like 10 years, I just, like I've got a Fresh Prince of Bel Air T-Shirt that I got from Primark in Peckham about 7 years ago, and I'll never throw that away, it's horrible, I'd never wear it outside and this sorta stuff but I don't know, there's just something about it and I've got a Turtles, or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles one as well that I got



at the same time and I was like, never throwing that away [laughs] um, but other things, yeah, most, 90% of my wardrobe I'd be more than happy just to...if it broke, get rid of, if I found something that was slightly better, I'd just get rid of it, straight away, very easy to.

S: If someone said they didn't like it?

M: [laughs] If someone just turned round and said it didn't suit me or they didn't like it, um, I'd get rid of it, but yeah, I don't have any qualms, but I'd always recycle, I'd always um, send it to the charity shop, I'd never just throw it away.

S: Yeah,

M: Or put it in the little bit out there, [gestures out of the window, there's a clothes recycling bin opposite the flats] the clothing donation thing out there.

S: Yeah, yeah.

M: Yeah, yeah, I'd always do that, I'd always think that why would anyone ever want to wear this like [laughs] but, um, yeah.

S: Ok, so, um, can you show me your treasured garment?

M: I can, do you want me to go and get it?

S: Either.

M: I'll go and get it, it's only on, it's only hung up on a hook in the hall, because I don't, I don't, it's a coat, so I don't put it in a wardrobe.

S: Ahh, yeah,

M: Or do anything like that, I use it as a coat, because it's a coat.

S: [laughs]

M: But it's just hung up on a, on a coat hook in the hallway, I'll go get it.

S: Thanks.

M: Do you want a drink of anything by the way?

S: Yeah, can I have a glass of water please?

M: Yeah sure,

S: Thank you.

M: Oh, I need to get the thing.

S: Thanks.

M: You're welcome [leaves room to get coat]

M: This is my treasured item, do you want it?

S: I'll look at it after, you can keep it and tell me about it.

M: Ok, I'm going to put it on [puts on coat] just because, so, this is my Woolrich parka, is it a parka? [checks inside label] yeah 'Artic Parka'.

S: Yeah,

M: So, do you want the full story behind it?

S: Yes please,

M: It, this kind of leads into [pulls hat out of inside pocket] huh? So, I got this, I haven't had it long but I'd definitely say it's probably the one item of clothing that if my flat was on fire I'd probably run and get this before I got anything else,

S: Yeah,

M: So about 2 years ago, end of 20...what year are we in now 2016?

S: It's 2018 now.

M: It's 2018, yeah so at the end of 2016 I'd just come out of a 6- year relationship,

S: Mhm,

M: And, I remember being at work one night and there was a guy who was over from our Canadian office, and we...it was his last day, been over for a few months, it was his last day before he went back, and we went out for a few drinks...a lot of drinks, and then I woke up in the morning and there was £600 not in my bank account...

S: Oh no,

M: And it was to Air Canada.

S: [laughs]

M: 'Jason, did I book a flight to Canada last night?' He was like 'Yeah, I think you did, I think you said you were going to come over in December' This was September time.

S: [laughs]

M: 'Ok, why did I do that?' He said 'You just said, you just said you wanted to get away for a few days, like, and I said come to Canada and you said OK so you booked a flight' And I was like OK, cool. [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: So um, I booked a flight to Canada, it was only a week, it was um...I was flying out on Boxing Day, coming back on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> [of Jan] or something, whenever that sort of 7 or 8 days is and I got, because I work for Movember that's...September to November is our busiest time.

S: Mm, yeah.

M: because we've got [inaudible], so I didn't really think about it until December and I was like 'Oh shit what am I going to do' like, I've got nowhere to stay, he was moving house so I couldn't actually stay with him or anything so...

S: Yeah,

M: Um, it's like, ok, fine, so I'm like looking at OK, what can I do in Toronto blah, blah, blah, blah, and I thought oh, found this thing which was erm, it was a park about 4 hours drive north of Toronto called Algonquin park and it's...and they do dog sledding, tours.

S: Mm,

M: So I was like, ah, I'll give that a go, so I emailed them, and said 'ah I'd love to do this, it's just me', and give, they do it on, they do a three day, it's really cool, they do a three day, so you do, dog sledding for like, 7 hours, and then you camp in the snow at night.

S: Oh wow,

M: And then you do it again the next day and the next day,

S: Yeah,

M: So you've got 2 nights and 3 days sledding and camping and it, you, it's proper wilderness stuff.

S: Mm,

M: So you have to chop down trees to build the fire, you have to go to the lake to get the ice...

S: Oh,

M: Open the ice to get the water to boil up,

S: Yeah, so there's nothing you're like...

M: Er, the tent, the only thing they've got, the tents are already built.

S: Yeah,

M: So you don't have to like, build the tents and stuff.

S: Ok,

M: So they're built on like, on wood [taps table] so they're not in the snow, literally, but yeah, you go out with all your supplies and everything, and just, it's brilliant. Anyway, they said no, we're full and I was like ok, fine, I'll think of something else, and then a couple of days later they said, we've had someone drop out, brilliant!

S: Yeah,

M: I'm in! And it was New Year's Eve 2016 for 3 days; so, um, this was like early December I'd figured this out, so I was like ok, cool, so I'm going to spend a few days in Toronto,

S: Mm,

M: Erm, then I'll go do this dog and camping thing and blah, blah, blah...oh shit I don't have a coat! [laughs]

S: [laughs] Yeah, and 3 days in the snow?

M: Yeah, and it's like minus 15!

S: Oh,

M: Like, it can be anywhere between -5 and -20.

S: Ooo, really cold.

M: So I was like, I need to get me a good coat. Me, not ever spending any more than about £50 on a coat from Gap or anything,

S: Mmm,

M: Had no idea what to get, and I didn't have a lot of money so it was like, ok I need to get myself a good coat but I don't have any money. So someone at work said 'Oh you should get a Woolrich', 'What's Woolrich' [mimes typing on a keyboard] Ok, they're about £1200 per coat.

S: Oh,

M: But they're, obviously my brain is going well they are the best coat you can get.

S: Yeah,

M: Like there's, it's kind of like Woolrich [makes high hand gesture] and then, umm [makes lower hand gesture] Canada Goose is like what H&M is to...you know, whatever.

S: Oh right, yeah,

M: Whatever's much better than H&M!

S: Cause I was going to mention Canada Goose because they're so trendy right now everyone's got one, for like, London, in Spring. [laughs]

M: [laughs] Yeah, because everyone just has Canada Goose.

S: Yeah,

M: Because it's trendy.

S: Ah,

M: Woolrich was the original Artic Parker,

S: Right,

M: So they were made for Alaskan Oil Miners,

S: Mmhm,

M: Erm, oil miners or oil drillers whatever you call them,

S: Yeah,

M: Oil people, so they were...they were build for to withstand, like, up to -40 [degrees]

S: Oh wow.

M: So it like, says it in here [pulls back coat and points at inside label] this patch, this patch says 100% down insulation 40 below, which is amazing.

S: Yeah,

M: Um, so they're kind of like the best of the best you can get,

S: Mm,

M: Um, but I didn't have £1200 to spend on a coat, so I was like well I'm never going to, I'm not going to buy one of them, so I just kind of completely forgot about it.

S: Mm,

M: And I looked Canada Goose and I looked at North Face...and a few people at work had Canada Goose, and they'd come apart and all this kind of stuff, and I was like, what shall I do? What shall I do?

S: Yeah,

M: Anyway, we were then, in a few days, having our Christmas party, which was 'White Christmas' themed.

S: Mm,

M: Everyone had to wear white, so I wanted to go in white, erm,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length trousers.

S: Yup.

M: Like chinos,

S: Yup,

M: With white adidas, this was in my head, white... white,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length chinos really tight, white adidas socks with high top converse, white converse,

S: Mmhm,

M: A white roll neck, with a white denim jacket.

S: Lovely.

M: White eyeliner, white hair.

S: Beautiful.

M: And that, that was what I had in my head.

S: Mmhm,

M: Where can I get all this? Obviously, Camden market, that's the best place to go, so I walked into the market and, you know The Stables Market?

S: Mm,

M: Right at the bottom?

S: Yeah, yeah,

M: And there's, as you go in on the left there's a couple of um, where you can get like leather, they've got loads of Burberry and Barbour jackets and all that kind of stuff.

S: Yeah, yeah.

M: I'll go in there; they'll have a white denim jacket really cheap.

S: Yeah,

M: So, um, I walked in and love that shop,

S: Mm,

M: It's one of my favourite places to, I never buy anything because nothing fits me, but I love browsing round that shop because it's just so, um, eclectic and you can get some...it's just good fun, um, anyway so I walked in and there was this red, bright red North Face jacket on the wall...

S: Mm,

M: It was like, it was like £50 and I was like 'That's really good.'

S: Yeah,

M: I tried it on, it was a bit tight, a bit small, as I picked it up, this one, gestures to his coat, was on the hook with it and it fell on the floor.

S: Ahhh.

M: And I went 'oh what's that?' and I picked it up, and I saw that it said 'Woolrich'.  
[gestures to the inside patch]

S: Yeah,

M: And I was like Ok, so I put it on, arms are little bit short [extends arms out to show sleeves are a couple of cm too short] as you can see, [pulls sleeves back down] but not...

S: Not too, too short.

M: No, no not at all, but I sort of put it on and went [makes nonplussed face] hmmm, meh, and then I just went...and I just stood there for about 5 minutes going I have to have this coat in my life.

S: Yeah,

M: And I just stood there looking in the mirror and was like, it's fine, it's really like big and whatever but...and I looked and I thought, this a genuine Woolrich.

S: Mm,

M: And I googled it and it's got this thing [points to inside patch] and there's something else, this a label and something else [points to label on opposite inside of the coat] and all this, this is a genuine coat this is a genuine Woolrich, it's worth about £1000 and I was actually expecting her to say it's like £500.

S: Yeah,

M: I was like 'How much is this' she went 'Um, £90' and I was like [smiles] Done! 100%, how do I pay you?!

S: Take my money!

M: Now! Immediately! Um, so yeah, I bought it and then, I remember cycling back from Camden to Farringdon and just sweating like...

S: [laughs]

M: I'm never going to wear this coat again in England, it's never going to be cold enough um, but it was quite warm that day anyway. So, yeah, and I took it and I went out to um, went out to Canada with it, and it was just that...it was...it was kind of, the significance of coming out of that relationship and moving on from that to, this was kind of that trip.

S: Mm,

M: Was kind of like the bridge between ok that's what I was and now this is where I want to be and this...



S: Mm,

M: It kind of helped me move on,

S: Yeah,

M: The whole trip if you like, and the coat, it kind of started with the buying of the coat I was like, it was the first time I'd really, I'd bought something really quality.

S: Mm,

M: That was, I know I'm going to have for the rest of my life.

S: Yeah,

M: Erm, and I never would have probably have done it if I hadn't...I never would have done that trip if I hadn't done it [ended the relationship], and I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much if I didn't have a really good coat that I could...I had to sleep in one night.

S: Yeah?

M: Because I stayed in a 'Bunky' which is basically a cabin, a shed next to someone's house.

S: Mm,

M: Erm, cause I had to stop over one night to get to the forest, and I had to sleep in it one night, because it was so cold and like, it was like – 15 and there was no heating in this little shed.

S: Oh?

M: And I was covered in blankets,

S: Yeah,

M: And like this [crosses arms over chest and hunches shoulders] and I had a hot tub, but that made me even colder, and just there, just sleeping in this blanket. In this coat, erm, so yeah and now it's...it's like yeah, it means a lot to me that erm, the story about when I got it and why I got it and yeah.

S: Mm, is it coming with you to Canada this time?

M: Yee...it will do, eventually, so I'm going to leave it here.

S: Yeah?

M: For a few...I haven't decided yet, I hope it will.

S: Mm,

M: At the moment I'm only going for 6 months.

S: Right,

M: Because I don't have like, the visas,

S: Yeah,

M: But that 6 months is their summer which is boiling,

S: Mm, oh right so you won't need the coat?

M: So I shouldn't need the coat, but they also said something that it gets really cold at night.

S: Mm,

M: So it could be 30 [degrees C] in the day,

S: Yeah,

M: And then like 5 [degrees C] at night,

S: Oh,

M: And then if it's like 10/ 15 in the day,

S: Yeah,

M: It could be -5 at night so it swaps, quite quickly.

S: Yeah,

M: Quite dramatically,

S: Mm,

M: So, I'm probably going to leave it here, and then if I need it, I'll get someone to post it out.

S: Yeah,

M: I think that's probably the best thing to do because I'm not going to have enough space in my bag to take it with me.

S: Yeah,

M: So, I want to but I don't know if a. if I'm going to need it because I've got to travel really compact,

S: Mm,

M: I can't take too much, so it unfortunately probably won't come with me, which I'm really sad about, but, it'll be ready to go in case I get there and I go...and I go 'It's freezing cold, quick, send me the coat immediately!'

S: Yeah, [laughs]

M: Which would be really scary because I'd be really worried that it would get lost in the post or something,

S: Yeah,

M: And the idea of it not travelling with me is really scary but...

S: Mm,

M: Erm, it would have to be a risk I'd be willing, I'd have to take I think, and hopefully it gets...because I'd have to vacuum pack it as well.

S: Yeah,

M: And hope that doesn't ruin it, shouldn't do?

S: No, it's just air.

M: It's just air,

S: It'll be fine.

M: Are you sure? [laughs] Are you sure it will be fine?!

S: Don't blame me! [laughs]

M: [laughs] She said it would be fine!

S: [laughs]

M: Just get it and it's just shrunk [laughs] erm, so yeah, that's probably what I'll do but I will...I will...I don't like...I get...I remember last year and the end of summer last year,

S: Mm,

M: I remember getting excited about it getting cold,

S: [laughs]

M: Just so I could wear it again, I can't wait until I can wear my coat again!

S: Yeah, it's been really cold as well,

M: It's been great! It's been the best winter for it, I've worn it so much this year!

S: [laughs]

M: Which I've been really happy with.

S: Yeah and everyone else whinging that it's cold and you're like "I'm not cold, got my coat."

M: Yeah, Ha! So we're going camping, so I'm going camping tonight, and my friend who's got a really, really shit coat,

S: [laughs] so harsh,

M: And every time we go camping I let him, like, wear it for an hour [laughs]

S: [laughs] Just to show off like "Put your coat back on now"

M: [laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah, just to go [smiles] just to give him a little treat for a little while, people always want to, when we're going out and we're walking or something people want to wear it for a little while and just [hugs himself] be hugged for a little while.

S: Just to warm up?

M: It is ridiculously warm, it's like, because it's all, it's 100% down.

S: Yeah, so it's like a duvet then?

M: It's basically like wearing a duvet [looks at the inside of the coat] [mutter] what's that little button for, yeah, it's basically like, wearing a duvet, it's great, it's like your not outside.

S: Yeah, that does sound amazing. Um, your trip to Canada this time, was it inspired by your trip to Canada a couple of years ago?

M: Oh yeah, yeah 100% um, so I got to the end of Movember last year, and I just kind of went, I need to do something different with my life.

S: Mm,

M: I need to get away for a bit, and I was looking at working, there's a website called 'workaway'?

S: Oh yeah,

M: Where you can just go and volunteer as you're travelling the world.

S: Yeah,

M: And I found, my sister actually found it on there I was looking to go to Iceland,

S: Mm,

M: And she found this one in Canada,

S: Somewhere to wear the coat?

M: Exactly! Basically was I was thinking, "Where can I wear the coat" [laughs] Iceland, Nordics, Canada.

S: [Laughs]

M: Um, yeah and then, that guy never got back to me, and then he, my sister found this other one which was looking after all these huskies and um, in the middle of the rockies somewhere,

S: Oh wow!

M: For a few months,

S: That's amazing,

M: And I was like, that's exactly what I want to do...So, yeah, completely inspired by that because, and also because I've got the equipment. [holds coat]

S: Yeah,

M: If I stay, so I'm doing 6 months and then I'm hoping they'll let me stay, visa depending, for another 6 months,

S: M,

M: To do the winter season,

S: Yeah of course,

M: In Banff to be a dog sled...a musher, which is a real word, er, for the season,

S: Oh great,

M: Which is then when I'd, where I'd need the coat obviously,

S: Yeah,

M: Because it would be like doing dog sledding tours for tourists,

S: Mm,

M: Around Banff everyday,

S: Wow, so like, just like the one you went on essentially, but you'd be the tour guide?

M: Yeah,

S: Aw,

M: So I'd move up to being the tour guide,

S: Yeah,

M: Which would be fun, so that's the ultimate dream

S: Mm,

M: But I don't know if visas will allow me to do that because I don't understand visas and nobody can...

S: No, no one understands them,

M: No one does! So I can apparently, maybe, possibly be there for 6 months,

S: Right?

M: On a tourist visa, kind of...maybe! [laughs] That's what I've understood from that, but I've got a ETA which is an electronic travel something, which means I can come and go as many times as I want in 5 years,

S: Right,

M: But it doesn't say how long you have to leave for or if I can just walk over the boarder into America,

S: Oh Right,

M: And come back,

S: Yeah,

M: for another 6 months,

S: You could just fly to New York or fly...

M: I'll be in Vancouver I can walk to Seattle and come back again!

S: [Laughs] and be like 'Back in, another 6 months.'

M: Yeah, but I don't know if you can do that,

S: Yeah,

M: That feels too easy.

S: Yeah surely...especially as there's no sea... it's a land boarder so...

M: It's a land boarder.

S: That would be quite easy to...

M: Or they say you've got to go to another country you can come back in except America?

S: Yeah?

M: I'll also be near Alaska so I could just go and drive into Alaska and back?

S: Yeah?

M: I don't know, I honestly don't know, so I'm just gonna, I've got the 6 months I've got to fly back in October.

S: Mmm.

M: I'll get to the boarder when I land and just go, let me stay for as long as I can, how long am I allowed to stay for?

S: Yeah,

M: They might say you can stay for a year,

S: Yeah, right.

M: In which case I'll stay for a year, they might say 6 months in which case I'll figure out what I do next, I might be able to get a working visa if they give me a job.

S: Right,

M: Because it's voluntary to start with.

S: I see, so it's...there's so many moving parts it's really dependent on if you get a job, if they sponsor you, if the visa people are nice if they like...

M: Yeah, yeah, yeah exactly it could be so many different things.

S: Yeah,

M: So I'm trying not to think about it,

S: Mm,

M: So it's a 6 month thing, I'm hoping it will be a year long thing.

S: Yeah,

M: But, we'll see, see what happens,

S: Exciting anyway, for the change?

M: Yeah well I've, I've been in London 8 years, I've moved from Suffolk to London and it's like, I just, felt like I needed to do something, while I could.

S: Yeah,

M: People can look after my flat, I'm not in a relationship, a job I can leave and quite easily come back to ...

S: Mm,



M: If I want to,

S: Oh, that's nice,

M: Hopefully they, they like me so I think they'll be fine.

S: Yeah,

M: Hopefully, they'll let me come back,

S: Mm,

M: So it just felt like the right time to do it really.

S: Great, um, can you tell me about, actually, hang on, when did your coat, when did you start to think of it as treasured?

M: When you came round,

S: When I came round?

M: Literally, no, sorry sorry, not when you came round, when you put that postcard through the door,

S: Yeah,

M: The conversations it opened up were fascinating,

S: Mm,

M: I think I said when you came round to talk about it,

S: Yeah, yeah.

M: I had never thought about an item of clothing as treasured before,

S: Yeah,

M: Never, I thought about them as maybe sentimental?

S: Mm,

M: As in, someone had given it to me, or I got it at time...

S: Yeah,

M: Like, um, I think I said something about, I'd done a run or something and I'd got a t-shirt.

S: Oh yeah?

M: At the end and it's like. "I was proud of that".

S: Yeah,

M: I wouldn't call it treasured

S: Mm,

M: Um, so when we started talking about it and the...L and M who I live with they were...it kind of opened up that question of, well, what would be treasured?

S: Mm,

M: And M was saying like anything you take anything out of that cupboard and she would say it was treasured,

S: Yeah,

M: Like, she's got a story behind it,

S: Mm,

M: Like I was wearing that when this happened.

S: Mm,

M: I was wearing that when I got engaged, I was wearing that the day after my wedding or whatever it was, I didn't really have any story like that, I never really think about 'Oh yeah that was when I was wearing that and I wore...'

S: Mm,

M: You put any moment in my life and I could not tell you what I was wearing unless you showed me a picture.

S: Yeah,

M: And I might go "Ah yeah that was a nice top", funnily enough I found, I was at my parents at the weekend and I found a photo of me when I was 18 and there is, I was [laughs] wearing, shows how bad I was at fashion I was wearing a green, like a racing green, er, like zip up...fleece?

S: A fleece?

M: It was...it was like a knitted fleece but it was a jaguar racing, like formula one racing.

S: Oh ok, yeah,

M: Top, that said Jaguar racing, and it was green, and it zipped up and I remember living in that!

S: Aw,

M: But I'd forgotten about it completely and I was like 'Ah, I used to just live in that, that jumper'.

S: Mm,

M: But I would never have said it was treasured,

S: Yeah,

M: I just, I just wore it all the time because it looked, I thought it looked good and it fit me.

S: Mm,

M: Erm, so, yeah, so when you...when you sort of...it really got the cogs turning,

S: Mm,

M: And thinking about 'What would I say was treasured, if I had to pick one thing?'

S: Yeah,

M: Out of my clothes, what would it be? L and M did the same, and we actually got on to what would I...what would they think of me?

S: Yeah?

M: About an item of clothing, what item of clothing would they think about when they thought of me? Which was interesting,

S: Yeah,

M: So it was an interesting way to go.

S: Mm,

M: Rather than thinking of what I was, what I treasured,

S: Mm, yeah,

M: It was what they attached to me, what item of clothing they attached to me, so we were talking about that and this coat came up and I was like 'oh yeah, that coat, it's like, I love that coat.'

S: Yeah,

M: I always call it, I call it the 'Mega Coat' [laughs]

S: [laughs] It's got a nickname?

M: Yeah, the Mega Coat, 'I can get the Mega Coat out', 'It's a good opportunity to wear the Mega Coat' 'can I borrow the Mega Coat?' [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: So that kind of got my brain working, I was just a bit like ok, yeah that's...and I started to think about when I bought it and why I bought it...

S: Yeah,

M: And what I was going to do and that...you know...somebody's...you know, I'd never heard of Woolrich,

S: Mm,

M: And then someone said 'Oh you should get a Woolrich' and then a day later I saw a Woolrich,

S: Yeah,

M: It just felt like, stupid to talk about like 'fate' with an item of clothing.

S: Mm,

M: But it felt like a bit like...that,

S: Yeah,

M: It was significant.

S: Mm,

M: Someone had said that to me, because then I would notice it and get it and it would make me really happy.

S: Yeah,

M: So yeah, until you'd put that little post through the door...

S: Mm,

M: I'd never really thought about an item of clothing as treasured.

S: Yeah,

M: And now, you've got it in my head that that this is [laughs] so it's quite good, but it is, it is, I would say this definitely is now, but I'd never thought about it before.

S: Yeah,

M: Nor could I think of any item of clothing that I now don't have or I've lost or it's broken at the time,

S: Mm,

M: That I'd go 'ah, I really treasured that item of clothing.'

S: Yeah,

M: Or 'I really loved that' or, there's nothing else I, because I'm having a big clear out.

S: Mm,

M: I've gone through everything, there's nothing else in there that I could, I would be sad to lose.

S: Yeah,

M: Only maybe if they cost a lot of money,

S: Yeah,

M: Like the DMs,

S: Mm,

M: If they ripped or something I'd be gutted, but, I'd buy a new pair.

S: Yeah,

M: And I'd get over it immediately

S: So, you'd, you'd be gutted more that you had to spend...

M: More money.

S: Spend more money on the same thing that you had?

M: Yeah.

S: Rather than...

M: Yeah,

S: Any particular attachment?

M: Yeah, and I think with this, I know this is irreplaceable,

S: Yeah,

M: It's not, of course, because I could just spend £1000,

S: Yeah,

M: But I know I wouldn't

S: Mm,

M: I'd never do that.

S: Yeah,

M: I don't think I would, maybe I would now I know how good it is? [laughs]

S: Now [laughs] now you know.

M: But, yeah, but I probably wouldn't.

S: Yeah.

M: Um, and it would never mean quite as much to me because it, it wouldn't have been at a time where I was going through such a transition.

S: Yeah,

M: It would just be another coat that I'd buy and it wouldn't be sentimental whereas this [smiles], this, people get annoyed with me about this coat when I talk about it.

S: Aw

M: And I was doing this thing, and I was going to Canada and I split up with...and this coat came along and it made me really happy, and all this kind of stuff so yeah, I think I'd say this is probably that one item I've ever had, where I go...that I'd be really sad.

S: Yeah,

M: If it went missing or got ruined or something,

S: Mm,

M: Saying that I don't keep it very well because it's got quite a lot of stains on it [points at front], it's quite muddy...I get wear out of it.

S: You use it,

M: I use it like a normal coat.

S: Yeah, you just wear it?

M: Yeah, I use it, I want it to be used properly rather than me go 'oh, no don't touch me'.

S: Yeah.

M: No no, don't touch me! [laughs]

S: Don't touch the coat this is worth loads of money.

M: Well this is it and I'm going to live with 150 dogs.

S: Yeah,

M: They're gonna jump up at me,

S: Yeah,

M: They're probably going to ruin this coat if I wear it around them.

S: Yeah,

M: So, maybe I shouldn't take it...maybe I'll just buy another one when I'm out there! [laughs]

S: [laughs] By a 'cheapo' Canada Goose one?

M: [laughs] In Canada? Maybe they're better in Canada I don't know, so yeah, I do, yeah, that's when I first thought about it being about...

S: Yeah,

M: About a treasured item is...your fault!

S: Ok,

M: I'm blaming you! [laughs]

S: And you know it is true about thinking of things, because I swear that's how I shop, so I think of an item I want, so I might see it on the internet or magazine or think ah, I really want one of those and then, you think of it, you look for it on ebay, and then you just go to charity shops.

M: Yeah,

S: And so often, there it is,

M: There it is yeah,

S: Exactly what you thought of in your head it just appears to you,

M: That's amazing,

S: It works I promise, I've been telling people for years, that all you need to do is think of the item you want.

M Lodge it in there,

S: And focus on it and then go to some shops and you'll find it,

M: I'm pretty sure there's a word for that,

S: Oh is there?

M: Because you know so, who was I talking to about it, you know when you've learned a new word?

S: Yeah?



M: You've never heard this word in your life,

S: Mmm,

M: And someone tells you a new word, all of a sudden you hear it everywhere?

S: Aaaah,

M: And there's a word for that process.

S: Oooh,

M: So it's the idea of, you've never heard of something and someone puts in your head and you start thinking about it,

S: Yeah,

M: All of a sudden, you see it everywhere, it's the same with clothing, that's what I want,

S: Yeah,

M: You've never seen it before,

S: And then you see it!

M: All of a sudden you'll start seeing it everywhere!

S: Ah,

M: We attach emotion to that kind of thing quite a lot.

S: Yeah,

M: There's a lot, there's a lot of like, a lot of threads about you know you see erm, a picture you like and then you'll start seeing similar pictures all over the place.

S: Yeah,

M: Even though you've never thought about that before it unlocks something.

S: Yeah maybe the things are always there you just notice them?

M: Yeah,

S: Cause I always think of Noel Edmunds [laughs] cause he did this thing...[laughs]

M: Obviously, I regularly think of Noel Edmunds about random things!

S: About 'Cosmic Ordering'

M: What's he got to do with cosmic ordering?

S: So he's really into cosmic ordering and it's about using the energy of the universe and thinking about things and they'll appear...like what we were saying.

M: Ok,

S: But he attributes it to some kind of 'cosmic magic'...look it up, anyway...off topic.

M: Sounds fascinating, I will look that up...Noel Edmunds, wow!

S: Who knew?

S: [pauses] Ok, so, oh, I'll do that after,

M [checks phone] Oh, of course I've got 18 messages! [checked his phone]

S: Oh always the way.

M: I've changed over to a pay as you go sim, because I'm going away, not my monthly one and...it's shit, the messages come through, I can't 'top up' it's awful, anyway.

S: Oh no 'top up' that's so funny!

M: I know!

S: How do I do this?

M: I've been trying to 'top up', phone this number, and then it says, you can't top up, you need to do this, [sighs] ah for fucks sake, very frustrating!

S: Nightmare.

M: Yeah.

S: So, what is the future for your garment, we've discussed it a little bit, um, are you planning on keeping it? Giving it away? Um, you wear it, you've already said you wear it, so how long do you think you'll keep it, do you think you'll give it away?

M: I'll never, ever, ever give it away, I like the idea of maybe, if I have a kid...

S: Mmm,

M: When he's like 20, passing it on,

S: When he's old enough?

M: Yeah, but I'd like to think, this, the idea is to have this as my coat now, forever.

S: Yeah,

M: As long as I look after it probably better than I do, there's no reason why I can't have this for the rest of my life.

S: Yeah,

M: That's, that's the plan of it, it is, when I go away, I'm only going for a year.

S: Yeah,

M: So I like, I'll leave it here,

S: Mm,

M: Or I'll take it back to my parents or something.

S: Yeah,

M: And they'll look after it for a bit, but, um, I'm hoping I can get it out, get it to come out with me.

S: Yeah,

M: Once I start packing, I might try and like, shove it in!

S: Squeeze it in, or just wear it? Be really hot on the plane?

M: I could just wear it, well I was thinking about this, cause the two big things that are heavy and take up a lot of space...

S: Mmm,

M: Are my DMs and my big coat,

S: Oh yeah?

M: I was like, do I wanna fly for 9 hours with DMs and a big coat [laughs] probably not, but...I, yeah, I might do...but then I've gotta take another coat because it's gonna be warm...I don't need both, I'm trying to be practical.

S: Yeah,

M: With what I'm taking so I probably won't, but I will get it posted out, special recorded super delivery to make sure, maybe I'll charter a private jet [laughs] to make sure it gets there - get the pilot to wear it on the plane, so it's never out of his sight.

S: I've genuinely done that, not on a private jet but when I worked as a lowly assistant in...for a fashion company I had to get a cab with this sample for a buyer,

M: Really?

S: From Kentish Town to the centre of, centre of London, and then give it to the buyer personally, by hand. They didn't want it to go through the post room, it was that urgent, then I had to get the tube back!

M: [Laughs]

S: So the sample got the taxi and they were like you just get on the tube, I was like oh, thanks.

M: That's amazing, oh wow!

S: It's the kind of thing that gets done, people do it.

M: Maybe that's what I'll do, yeah, my friend works for GQ he's like an assistant person and he has to do that quite a lot he has to go and, yeah, travel around the world with like, very special things.

S: To make sure they get there?

M: Just for a photoshoot, to make sure they get there yeah.

S: Yeah, cause there's couriers, but people don't trust couriers.

M: No.

S: And, I mean, with good reason, they always lost things, so, yeah, can you quickly tell me about where and how you store it and I'll film where it's stored.

M: Yeah, I store it on a coat hook...with all the other coats [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: In my hall.

S: Ok cool, we'll go look.

M: Let me show you,

S: So it's not stored in a particularly special way?

M: No, I'll demonstrate what happens...I come in my front door...[takes off coat] and it goes...here, that's it, I kind of push it there so it doesn't stick out too much [laughs]

S: Ok, thanks very much

-----ENDS-----

### 10.3 Rhuza Interview Transcript

R: How much of me is there?

S: Erm, you are...

R: Up to here, waist height?

S: Yeah, waist height and you're in that part of the screen so you'll be looking sideways.

R: Ok,

S: Let's actually...

R: Dust!

S: [laughs]

R: It's like, if I don't dust every week...

S: It's amazing what you spot when you start looking isn't it?

R: Yeah! Definitely, I, I need to make time for cleaning you know, it's like....

S: We have a cleaner if you need a cleaner recommendation, she's very nice, she's very good.

R: Ahhhh, I might mention this to the guys.

S: Yeah, I've never seen our kitchen floor so clean, I genuinely don't know how she does it, when I clean the kitchen floor it's not that clean.

R: I hate this carpet, if I could remove it.

S: Oh yeah, the carpets, our carpets like a ugly brown colour as well, but, ho hum, let me just check it's recording because my constant fear...

R: Yeah of course....I love your sliders!

S: Ah thanks, they're new, I got them for my birthday.

R: Very, very nice.

S: Yeah,

R: I love Moschino.

S: I didn't think, I didn't think my husband was going to get them for me, because I went on and on about them, I was like, I want them so much!

R: Oh, so sweet!

S: And then he got them! Yay.

R: They're super cool.

S: Yeah, and he was like, you better make sure you wear them now and I was like, Ok, I'll wear them all the time.

R: You have to,

S: Yeah,

R: Not cycling though.

S: No, not cycling.

R: You can't in sliders, I mean I cycle sometimes in jelly sandals and people are like 'why are you cycling in these?'

S: I've tripped over in them twice because, like, I didn't pick my feet up.

R: This is the thing about sliders, they're a bit funny when you're outdoors.

S: Yeah, if there's little bits in the pavement, you catch them, and then my foot like, slid through and I was like oh my god what if I've ripped them? I've had them a week.

R: Mmmm,

S: I'm gonna break them.

R: I know, they're tres precious!

S: Yeah ok....

R: Ok,

S: So, um, can you tell me a little bit about yourself to start with?

R: Erm, I erm, I'm a learning support assistant in a secondary school, my name is Ruhza, er, I also make ceramics and the creative side of my life is very important. Er, yeah, I have got, er, a studio space, that I do go as much as I can, and I do yeah, lots

of things that are connected to, erm, some kind of artistic outlet. As well as that I'm hoping to enroll in the Art Psychotherapy course at Goldsmiths.

S: Oh lovely.

R: Erm, because I've just finished the foundation,

S: Mmm.

R: Literally, almost, and yeah, that's that, hopefully things will progress from there.

S: Yeah, and erm, can you tell me a little bit more about any hobbies, erm, family, friends?

R: Mmmhmm,

S: How long you've lived in London?

R: I...I guess, I dunno if it is a hobby but, erm, ceram...making cermaics,

S: Mmm,

R: Just, just ceramics and jewellery recently is probably something that has been, kind of...has become of a big of a part of my life.

S: Yeah,

R: And I always try and make time, erm, about....time, to do those things.

S: Mmm,

R: Perhaps that could be a hobby, I don't know, obviously reading and...

S: Yeah,

R: Erm, cinema and yeah, all of those, about family, my family, my Mum, Dad and my sister live in Bulgaria, come from Bulgaria.

S: Mmhm,

R: Sofia, and they just recently, recently visited and it was really really nice, er, in London I have got a wonderful boyfriend, I would say...I could say probably perhaps partner?

S: Yeah,



R: Er, yeah, his name is J, and yeah, we've been going out for about a year and things are wonderful, erm, friends? I have got wonderful friends, people that I very dearly love and cherish and erm, er, they are all kind of creative in a way.

S: Mm,

R: Everyone does their own thing, my...one of my closet friends makes wonderful hats, erm, filmmaking as well, it's like, yeah, it's erm, yeah, it's a very wonderful circle of friends, I have to say.

S: Yeah, oh, how long, how long have you lived in this apartment?

R: Um, 7 years.

S: Oh wow,

R: Yeah, it has been a long, long while.

S: Yeah,

R: I've, I've occupied this room, yeah, since yeah two thousand and I dunno, 2002?

S: No?

R: No that's nonsense...2011, 2011!

S: [laughs] 11, yeah,

R: 2002 I came to London, 2002.

S: Ok,

R: And, I've changed it here quite a few times.

S: Yeah,

R: There were different, at one point the whole room was covered in just postcards and images,

S: Mmm,

R: Images of paintings and things that I've been to and I like erm, yeah lots of, lots of my paintings and things that, yeah, ceramics as well you can see my work around.  
[gestures to a shelf out of shot]

S: Oh yeah,

R: And friends work, lots of...all of this is my friends work,

S: Mmm,

R: Er, yeah and here there's lots of things that are framed but not hanged...hang, so yeah.

S: Yeah, where did you live before you moved to London, was it somewhere else in the UK or?

R: No, always London.

S: Always London.

R: I came to London I think 2002 to study.

S: Yeah,

R: And I stayed here,

S: Just stayed?

R: I've lived in various places,

S: Mmm,

R: All over London,

S: Yeah,

R: Erm, to start with in West London, Chelsea

S: Mmm,

R: After that North London, Archway, Willesden Green and Kilburn afterwards...

S: Really everywhere!

R: Everywhere, yeah yeah, like all of the place but there were kind of like, not, every single place I've lived in had, like, contained very interesting story.

S: Mmm,

R: And I did meet some really wonderful friends alongside,

S: Yeah,

R: Throughout the whole journey,

S: Along the way?

R: So yeah, but in the past 10 years, a good, solid 10 years I've lived in South East London.

S: Mmm, yeah,

R: Yeah.

S: Erm, how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

R: Oh [smiles] I love it but, there is erm...you, you'll see in a bit, one of my most treasured garments is probably something that, a piece of work by Katherine Hammnet,

S: Mmm,

R: That is manufactured and made in er, very sustainable, ethically, ethical way.

S: Mmm,

R: As well as the cotton is, comes from a, a fair traded, fair place.

S: Yeah,

R: Cause the, the evil side of fashion comes into, that's what hurts me the most.

S: Yeah,

R: Like, the fact that fabrics are made of textiles and textures that are not biodegradable,

S: Mmm,

R: And it's a massive problem.

S: Yeah, yeah it is.

R: And everything is very expensive.

S: Mmm,

R: I also do feel for, I have got a very dear friend called CF, she's an incredible er, er, clothes designer and just, just a wonderful, wonderful human being. But she also does campaign against all of that, so yeah, fashion in general, it's, it's amazing of course.

S: Mm,

R: It's super cool right, it's like, yeah, wonderful, I love it, er, but I don't like very much, the, this other side.

S: Mm,

R: I sometimes...I guess [pauses] the various stigma as well with kind of, how women should look,

S: Mm,

R: Predominantly because it's very women orientated,

S: Yeah,

R: Business I think.

S: Mm,

R: Maybe I see it different, maybe I'm wrong, maybe it's not, both men and, men and women but it's kind of...it's always...yeah, don't know, yeah, I don't know but yeah.

S: So how would you describe your personal style?

R: Oh gosh, I think it's a wonderful variety of everything but it is predominantly something that it is very, very...it's kind of comfortable to wear.

S: Mmm,

R: Sometimes [pauses] I find buying...getting something expensive...it's more of an investment rather than...an expensive clothing more of an investment.

S: Yeah,

R: Rather than, um, I dunno, it's a special...special occasion I guess, but I do love charity shops and I have found incredible stuff in charity shops.

S: Yeah?

R: Yeah,

S: Where do you buy most of your clothes?

R: Salvation Army is incredible,

S: Mmhm,

R: Erm, there is one really good Salvation Army shop in Balham,

S: Ahh,

R: It's where I really like going and not only, I mean there is Oxfam and so, just anywhere really, all over the place.

S: Mm,

R: But, I haven't been...I have been really really strict with myself recently so, I've been behaving and have not bought anything apart from this Calvin Klein dress.

S: Ahhh, [laughs]

R: But I don't like it very much, I feel like I want to re-work something about it.

S: Mm, so how about the high street?

R: It looks very nice, it looks very nice on,

S: Yeah,

R: Visually but yeah, I can show it to you later,

S: Yeah!

R: Mm,

S: So how about the high street and other designers, do you shop there very often? You mentioned er, Calvin Klein.

R: Mmm, maybe just now and then!

S: Mmm,

R: I mean now Fiorucci [gestures towards her top] is a very, very...maybe because of Mark Leckey as well, he's, he's kind of, I don't know, he's just funny, he just makes me laugh when he's like 'Fiorucci made me hardcore' [but, it's, I dunno, I just love their stuff.

S: Mm,

R: I hate their campaign, I think their campaigns is absolutely stupid.

S: Yeah,

R: The way things are shot.

S: Mmm

R: And the girls are really like...what are you wearing? Their silly hair, but the clothes are wonderful.

S: Yeah,

R: Not all...quite expensive, I mean this [gestures to the top she's wearing], this is something that I really, really love, erm, and I bought it on sale, so it was like, very good.

S: Yeah,

R: Yup, so yeah I don't know, not very much really, I can't really afford...

S: Mm,

R: I can hardly afford something,

S: Yeah,

R: High street fashion, but Calvin Klein is quite reasonably priced.

S: Mm,

R: The underwear is very wonderful.

S: Yeah,

R: Mm.

S: And so how often would you say you purchased clothing, you say you've been good recently but, how often do you think you buy something new?

R: [smiles] I don't know, it's really, really, er, it used to be like, crazy like every month.

S: Yeah,

R: As soon as I get paid I would just be like, ok, let me have...I need to have a look what I can get.

S: Mm,

R: And only recently I started, like, looking at things online.

S: Yeah,

R: I don't really do that, I usually would just go to the shop.

S: Mmhm,

R: It could be tiny little thing but I would always buy something.

S: Yeah,

R: So this dress, I did not, maybe it took me about...it was like, I dunno, three months? Since I bought something else? So yeah.

S: Yeah, and...

R: So yeah I dunno...it's very sporadic and like, now and then.

S: Yeah, why did you stop going to shops and start looking online? What do you think? And why have you started buying less recently?

R: Maybe because I've been trying to restrain, restrict myself with, this kind of urge like, Ok, I'm going now to do that very exact thing, I think sometimes, even I find, I find work some days to really take over me...

S: Mm,

R: Emotionally, so I don't feel, I don't feel very, very nice about it but, I just want to have some kind of...rest of some sort, almost like, some kind of therapeutic way of just like going, take your mind off, mind away and just buy something.

S: Yeah, mm.

R: But, I kind of realized, I don't know what it is, I've kind of realized that actually I could save up money and I have been giving lots of clothes away.

S: Mm.

R: Because it's like, I do have lots of clothes and I don't need that many...as well as that, I could save money.

S: Mm,

R: So I invest the money into assets and studio space and so on.

S: Yeah,

R: Materials and so on.

S: Yeah and how much do you normally spend per item?

R: I dunno, varies...it could be like...for this dress [the Calvin Klein dress] like, I spend like £115.

S: Yeah,

R: Really? Why? It's like, very plain satin...I also do sew, I started like using my sewing machine and I thought maybe I can just if I have, if I find a good fabric...

S: Mm,

R: I could just do it myself but still there is something about, the ready made clothing that is like, you can't really do it yourself in the same way,

S: Yeah,

R: It's very like, accessible, quick way of kind of having something that actually oh yeah, that looks nice.

S: Yeah,

R: But the other thing with shopping online without trying on stuff is very, very...it's not very nice, I don't like that.

S: No,

R: So I think probably [I] will stop [laughs].

S: [laughs]

R: After this dress I bought it's like, ok well, it's not the right length, maybe I need to shorten it?

S: Yeah,

R: I like altering things as well.

S: Mm, with...so how much, apart from the dress, how much do you spend on clothes when you go to the charity shops or?

R: I don't know maybe 20, 30 pounds?



S: Mm,

R: Maybe less? I mean, I guess inflation, money has gone up.

S: Yeah,

R: So yeah the other day I did like, not the other day but a few months back I did look at Oxfam shop and I found this really nice dress, it was like £45, was like for real?

S: Oh, in Oxfam?

R: I know! Yeah, yeah in Oxfam but it was like Yves Saint Laurent.

S: Oh wow,

R: So it was something very special so I was like, Ok.

S: Yeah, so, you mentioned you were, erm, getting rid of clothes more, erm, more recently so, how easy or difficult do you find it to divest yourself of clothes to either give them away or to let them leave your wardrobe?

R: Oh my god it's really hard!

S:[laughs]

R: [laughs] it's really hard, I just I'm like 'mmmm' [makes sad face] but...on the other hand, I kind of, I always...I started like, ok, well if they have been with me for like, I dunno, 6/7 months,

S: Mm,

R: And I have not worn this thing what is the point of having that?

S: Yeah,

R: So yeah.

S: Um, and so where did you...when you get rid of your clothes where do they go? Do you sell them, do they go to the charity shop?

R: Ah, I've tried Ebay, I've taken some pictures but my boyfriend said well, they don't look ok, I mean you have to do this, you have to do that, so I was like, uh, ok, so I haven't done that yet, but I think I will sell a few bits and pieces on Ebay.

S: Mm, yeah,

R: I'll try...it's a, it's a nice way of getting rid of things...

S: Mmm, yeah,

R: And, um, yeah, getting some money out of it in the end.

S: And, what's led you to make the decision to start sorting through, er, your clothes and when did you start thinking about it?

R: It's just the space, it's just having space for clothes, you know you can't just live in one room and have everything, I mean, clothes, books...

S: Mmm,

R: You need to have space, plus I have got a very, erm, sometimes I have quite impulsive way of buying stuff...

S: Mm,

R: I bought this wardrobe, which is like a tiny little piece of...it's just not very much,

S: Yeah,

R: It's very little, erm and I wish I just don't do that, I didn't do that.

S: Mm,

R: But that's that so yeah...so yeah, I do....it's basically about storage and just a massive decluttering, sometimes I think we...I dunno, relationships and kind of stuff that you have experienced in the past kind of take...you kind of, you're full of, kind of...objects and clothes and things that remind you perhaps of that and you kind of...it's maybe time to let go.

S: Yeah,

R: So yeah, I think that's that as well.

S: Mm.

R: Mm.

S: So can you um, can you show me your treasured garment or garments?

R: Yes, I can, I would love to, right, Ok...so this shirt is...I found this shirt in a charity shop...right, ok, so it has some wonderful...it's pure silk, it's such a pleasant garment to wear, I love it to bits, and it has incredible pattern of this kind of animals, mmm, from Africa I guess? I guess but obviously...very pretty and I love this...their faces,

and this, the sleeve is amazing, plus, I made the button for the very top of it so I even love it more then, yeah I love this shirt, it's one of my favourite favourite things...ever.

S: And do you remember where you got it?

R: Yeah, it was on Walworth Road.

S: Oh yeah,

R: In a charity shop, erm, just before erm, where was? Just, erm, after the ice cream place?

S: Oh yeah, ah, Caspers?

R: Yeah, Caspers yeah, I believe so, before or after.

S: Yeah,

R: It's this tiny little charity shop on the corner, they have beautiful things now and then there, yeah, it was like £2.50 for this incredible, wonderful silk shirt, it's started to fray away a little bit, so I'm a little bit worried about it but...I also love these trousers [gestures to the bright purple trousers she is wearing] they are Levis vintage trousers, I found them in a charity shop again they were like £5.

S: How long have you had the shirt?

R: Erm, like 3, 4 years, an I always wear it, it's like...not always, but yeah, everytime I wear it everyone's always like 'Ahhhh' and I love it, it's such a nice feel.

S: And, where have you worn it to? Do you have any memories of wearing it?

R: Yeah, like parties and erm, er, I wore it the other night to my friends birthday it was in this like, club in Soho, there was like sensational, everyone was like 'Wow where is this shirt? Where is this from'

S: [laughs]

R: Yeah, just everywhere really, I've wore it to work, I 've worn, yeah.

S: Yeah, so is it, is it more of a night out shirt or do you wear it casually?

R: I think day and night.

S: Yeah you wear it both?

R: Yeah both because my style is like...I usually wear this with...like I am with trousers but with Converse.

S: Mm,

R: Or sometimes like loafers,

S: Mm,

R: So yeah, it works either way.

S: And when did you think of it as, er special or treasured?

R: Erm, just be....I will be really like...if a friend, I don't mind sometimes giving clothes to my friends but if a friend asked me to wear this shirt I would be like 'no, sorry', maybe that's when I thought about it! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

R: [laughs] I'm quite possessive like, no! Mine mine mine! My special thing...although I'm so lucky, my friends are super kind and generous with, with stuff, they have always given me some really lovely stuff to wear.

S: Mm,

R: But, I'm not going to give them this so...

S: And what is it about the shirt that makes it so special to you?

R: It's the fabric and the pattern and the, just the pleasant feeling of wearing it.

S: Mm,

R: It's like, such a nice feel.

S: Yeah, how do you feel when you wear it?

R: Lovely, glamorous, it really like, brings out, like a...just, just, the sleeves makes...make it all very special, they're like, kind of this, really beautiful sleeves...I quite often tie a bow at the front.

S: Mm,

R: So it kind of really, goes really nicely with high waisted trousers, but I've worn it with the velvet dress, with the velvet dress, yeah.

S: And what's the future for this item? What's the future for your item?

R: Ooooooh, I really hope it will stay forever but, as I said I need to be really careful with washing this, I mean I'm quite naughty I put this in the washing machine, I probably shouldn't have done that, erm, but you can see how here [shows camera the hem of the shirt] it's just fraying.

S: Mm,

R: I need to probably repair that with nice piece of silk or something.

S: Mm,

R: That could stop it from fraying because the, the thread will slowly start to disintegrate.

S: Yeah,

R: I would imagine it was made probably like, 70s to 80s and I really hope bloody moths will never touch this garment.

S: Yeah,

R: So far they haven't, but yeah.

S: And...

R: Yeah?

S: And is there a garment you wished you still had that would be your treasured garment if you still had it, that you've got rid of?

R: Ah, good question, yeah I think so, there was this really lovely Levis dress I had like, knee length with poppers all the way and I did give away this dress I wish I didn't.

S: Yeah,

R: Other than that, no, I don't mind.

S: Mm,

R: It's a good thing to go.

S: Yeah, and can you show me where this garment is stored?

R: Yeah.

S: Yeah.

R: In my wardrobe...or here [gestures to back of door] you can see there's clothes everywhere, just inside my wardrobe, tiny wardrobe just there. [places hanger in middle of wardrobe next to other shirts]

S: Is there an order to the wardrobe?

R: No! Of course not, it's just like...some kind of order...I mean yeah, actually there is, some special things are on hangers but other stuff like bed linen is underneath.

S: Mm,

R: Up here [gestures to shelf at top] is like underwear, and t-shirts so yeah...it's very, very little this wardrobe, I wish I didn't have it! [laughs]

S: Yeah there's not much space.

R: No, there isn't, but I'll make some space, I'll give it away.

S: Can you show me some of the other garments you mentioned that were treasured?

R: Yeah, of course....ah, something actually that I was just...[opens wardrobe, gets out dress] you would...I love this, those, this leggings were made by my friend CF.

S: Oh nice,

R: And her company called 'No Such thing....As Bad Weather'

S: [laughs]

R: And she makes beautiful, ethical clothing.

S: Yeah,

R: Those leggings were made in London.

S: Is this reflective this bit?

R: Yes it is!

S: Is it for cycling?

R: Yes it is,

S: Oh wow,

R: And she has this incredible cycling company,

S: Yeah,

R: But again fashion, it's about money.

S: Mmm,

R: I mean leggings like this cost like, I think 50 quid?

S: Oh,

R: It is expensive but they are a wonderful investment.

S: Mm,

R: And I'm really proud of her that she launched it.

S: Yeah, yeah they're great!

R: The are great, I think you should definitely have a look at 'No Such Thing as Bad Weather'.

S: Yeah,

R: But now she campaigns a lot for climate change and the environment.

S: Mm, yeah.

R: In London I mean, we live in London, one of the most polluted cities.

S: Yeah,

R: In fact our area is one of the most polluted areas.

S: Yeah, I saw that yeah,

R: I know it's bad, erm, but yeah, they're...so yeah I love those leggings and they're very special and I wear them all the time, right ok, erm.

S: Oh and you mentioned the Katherine Hamnett one?

R: Yes! I've got my t-shirt, where is it? It's massive, it's giant [searches on bed for t-shirt] oh there it is! Of course, I've laid it out, there [holds t-shirt up, it's plain navy blue] yeah, it's lovely it's like, oversized t-shirt and then I wear it usually with wide leg trousers and white boots.

S: How long have you had that?

R: Erm, maybe about a year? Yeah, I love it, I bought it on sale as well.

S: Mm,

R: Which was really, really affordable.

S: Yeah, How much was it?

R: I think like, £40, which was like, quite reasonably priced I think for a t-shirt of such quality.

S: Yeah,

R: Yeah I love it, I really do like it, er, and I like the fact it's navy blue, I really tend sometimes to wear just lots of dark colours,

S: Mmm,

R: Cause I dunno, it's easier I guess?

S: Yeah,

R: And my other very lovely item is this t-shirt, because it has been designed by my boyfriend's niece.

S: Aw,

R: Molly [pseudonym] and it's super cool and the money from this t-shirt went to charity, so yeah, she kept only like 10% of it.

S: Yeah,

R: And she's only 10 years old so...

S: Aww,

R: Pretty amazing, yeah, I love this and it's made by this wonderful company Blues in erm, Bristol, yeah, erm, it's a really lovely place to buy stuff.

S: Mm,

R: Although, I need to have a bit of money, but, yeah there was a wonderful collaboration with a charity and yeah, I believe those are my favourite things.



S: Mm.

R: I mean, I love my clothes, to be fairly honest.

S: Yeah,

R: They're yeah, quite special, I love to have them always with me.

S: Yeah, so why is it the shirt in particular more than the other things you've showed me that you like?

R: I don't know! Because it's a one and only unique piece of work.

S: Yeah,

R: This is wonderful too [holds up t-shirt piece designed] but I guess, when you know the people, this is something I feel like it could be reproduced.

S: Mm.

R: And with this silk pattern shirt...it's already in the cupboard it's like how can you possibly reproduce all of this pattern?

S: Yeah,

R: It's, it's the fabric I think that makes it very special, the pattern.

S: Yeah,

R: And the cut as well...you can always make the same cut and the look,

S: Yeah,

R: But how do you get this wonderful pattern?

S: Mm so...

R: It's a big process isn't it?

S: Yeah,

R: The creativity behind, that's what, it is very important, I don't know if it was made in ethical shop?

S: Mm, yeah,

R: Or workplace, but who knows? Mm, yeah.

S: And do you have any, erm, I know I've asked you about memories...

R: Mmhm,

S: Specifically but, erm, yeah, do you have any special moments or times when you've worn those garments, or can you not think of them in particular?

R: Just like being like, oh no I'm not wearing this tonight,

S: Mm,

R: Uh huh, oooh, yeah I guess, I mean every morning is like decision, what do I wear?

S: Mm,

R: It's a bit tricky sometimes, I do actually struggle sometimes like what am I going to wear and that's why I started getting rid of clothes as well this is one other reason.

S: Mm,

R: There's way too much choice.

S: Yeah,

R: No need for that, er, so yeah, I dunno, I guess, yeah.

S: Erm, what else....

R: I do tend sometimes to buy like, if I have to find a nice pair of jeans I tend to buy 2 of those.

S: Mm,

R: So it forever, same with socks.

S: Mm.

R: [Shrugs]

S: So...I think I've got...I think that's all my questions done,

R: But I remember, I remember from early childhood,

S: Mmm,

R: Like always, always, always wanting to have something that is like 'oh wow',

S: Yeah,

R: This is super cool, I have to have that, with my first ever money I worked as an extra in one of my Mum's films, and, I got paid some money that, you know, I was a kid.

S: Mmm,

R: And, I went and bought myself a really lovely burgundy scarf with beautiful white stripes.

S: Mm, yeah,

R: Yeah, I remember doing that, with my money, I was like, Mum, I want this

S: Mm,

R: And she gave me and was like, yeah, just get it.

S: Do you still have the scarf?

R: I don't actually it shrunk in the machine.

S: Oh no,

R: Stupid, yeah, went down to this size [puts her fingers about a foot apart] and with moving houses, I have actually had quite a few things stolen as well as I've lost stuff.

S: Mm,

R: So yeah, no I don't, it disappeared.

S: Yeah,

R: I'm pretty certain nobody had taken it... it's just, yeah, but I did have a really lovely jacket stolen I was very upset.

S: Mm,

R: And I lost lots of cashmere garments always...

S: Oh yeah, to the moths?

R: They somehow disappear, I lost them in clubs.

S: Oh no,

R: Naughty, yeah.

S: Yeah.

R: Yeah.

S: So can you say a bit more about erm, the shirt and erm, how you look after it and how you care for it?

R: Ok, so I'm terrible with looking after, but...actually not terrible, sometimes I'm really good, I could perhaps, I do, I do use, sometimes I do handwash.

S: Mm,

R: But I find with handwash fabrics just don't feel the same as after they've been washed in the washing machine.

S: Yeah.

R: I usually use, erm, natural things.

S: Mm.

R: Um, the soap powder, the wash powder I use is eco and I like that because it doesn't have any...erm, it smells very pleasant

S: Oh yeah?

R: And very light, but also, erm, it's kind of, they say it's made from non-harmful detergents and substances.

S: Yeah,

R: So yeah, that's how I care for it so either it's washing machine on a delicate cycle or I wash it by hand.

S: Mm, yeah.

R: Yeah, and I store it in the cupboard and I have some kind of erm, mint scent inside my wardrobe.

S: Mm, would you keep, would you keep the shirt even if you couldn't wear it anymore?

R: Yeah of course! I would love to.

-----ENDS-----

## 10.4 George Interview Transcript

S: Ok, can you please confirm that you have read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form?

G: I have yes,

S: Ok, perfect, and can you tell a bit about yourself?

G: Erm, my name's George, I work as a creative events producer, predominantly running, erm, bars at festivals and corporate events, but I also specialize as a theatrical, scenic and artist, I do lots of costume design, fashion illustrations, erm, and yeah, set building at set painting really.

S: And can you tell me about erm, your family, friends, hobbies?

G: Yeah, my family erm, well, my Dad was in the army for a long time, my Mum was a, um, housewife, er, we grew up in Buckinghamshire, in the countryside so very beautiful, lots of like, trees and chickens and pigs and sort of farmy stuff. Which was really lovely, erm, I moved to London to do an art degree when I was 18, I went to St Martins and then I went to Goldsmiths, erm, hobbies include, mm, drawing lots, painting, erm, partying, erm, I've got a really diverse group of friends it's really nice, we've sort of all kind of mulched together from various different walks of life so it's a yeah, a bit of a mixture.

S: And how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

G: Erm, I am very interested in erm, clothes and fashion, I think it's a really wonderful subject, I think historically it's fascinating, and also in terms of modes of dress and how people express themselves, erm the process of design and how different fabrics are made and printed and colour matching and texture and all the elements of, of fashion and what makes erm, costume and fashion interesting. Erm, kind of pushes all my buttons, I'm interested in a lot of different aspects of it really.

S: Mm, how do you feel about erm, clothes and fashion in relation to yourself and your personal style?

G: Erm, I've always been very emotionally attached to the things that I wear, erm, I think lots of things growing up, erm, I'm very interested in things and trinkets and symbols and that has kind of, that has translated quite easily into me having quite a particular style and me...and growing up, I've always had lots of different, different modes, it's always, it's changed, I've never only just worn one thing and as I've got older it's kind of settled into a more George style, but, I certainly remember as a teenager I was very into sort of the skater look and wore baggy ripped jeans, erm and like, Nirvana t-shirts and like Green Day bag and all of that, erm, and then I became quite gothic, I painted my nails and I did loads of make up and I had like the baggy black jeans and fishnet tops and all that kind of stuff, erm, and then when I

moved to London it was like this whole other world of possibilities opened up because where I was from in Buckinghamshire everyone dressed you know, those tropes.

S: Mmm,

G: You know you had you had the townie, you had the goth, you had the skater boy, erm, and they're quite fixed and then I got to London and I was like this is great, there's a lot of different stuff we can do here, and the people I was at art college with had a similar attitude, we used to go to club nights, erm, like Tesco Disco and Boombox, where people just wore the most outrageous things, you know, I remember seeing tonka trucks in their hair or wearing dresses made out of binliners and gaffa tape and erm, quite rebellious but also fun...ways of dressing and then I sort of picked up elements of that and when I started buying stuff and going to charity shops, obviously when you're a student in London you shop in charity shops.

S: Mmhm,

G: Erm, and just finding stuff and buying it not because it was cool or because it was practical necessarily, but buying it because it was beautiful or interesting or it had something different about it. Erm, and I think that helped hone how I now see my own personal style because it's an eclectic mix of found objects that are then, kind of, I bring together into what I wear on a daily basis.

S: Um, can you say a little bit more about your style so what kind of clothes do you wear everyday or when you're going out?

G: Yeah I'm having a huge rebellion against trousers at the moment, I'm really enjoying wearing um, just bits of fabric, I suppose you'd call it a sarong but um, I've got obsessed with African print fabrics like cotton textiles that you can just knot round your waist erm, I really like the way it hangs, I like how comfortable it is, I like how you can move in it, um, and then I wear lots of accessories, so lots of jewellery. Erm, I wear lots of bracelets, but um, my boyfriend and I travel quite a lot so I buy lots of jewellery from all over the place, erm, and then they're kind of my two main things?

S: Mm,

G: It's like, bright colors, and patterns and then lots of accessories and then, I quite like...I don't know, ironically, but I quite like simple other elements.

S: Mmm,

G: So that it's not, like, it's not too much, I wear the same pair of, like, black boxing boots everyday, yeah I wear mostly black t-shirts or polo necks, which I then accessorize, um, and then the other thing that I'm very big on is jackets.

S: Mm,

G: I've collected jackets for years and I have, you know, a whole rack of just jackets. Um, you know from big leather fur collared, like, Harlem gangster jackets to beautifully embroidered, like Indian groom's jacket um, dinner jackets, suit jackets, pin stripe jackets...I'm, I like, love a good jacket [laughs]

S: Love a jacket, um, so how often would you say you purchase clothing and where do you purchase it from?

G: I would like to think that I'm very restrained and don't buy very often....but it's mostly all the time! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: And from anywhere I can get my hands on it! [laughs] Erm, I buy, erm I buy a lot of my basics online, so, um, t-shirts, polo necks, um pants and stuff, I'll get online but I'll try and source ethically, so, I do, I do always try and think about where I'm buying stuff and the impact it has environmentally and socially, I really don't like shopping in high street shops where I think the, the factory culture and manufacturing culture is just so unspeakable that it doesn't even cross my mind to go there, erm, I buy a lot of my fabric from er, there's a beautiful African shop just down the road in Camberwell where I, you know I go in and buy African fabric, erm jewellery I mostly buy when I travel, because I'm sentimental like that, all of my jackets are second hand, charity shop finds, there are some great places in White City and in Islington, um there are great charity shops and just, finding stuff, I think it's, it's more about, for me it's more about finding things and then wearing them as opposed to buying things that I, that I need, or have seen in a magazine or anything

S: Mmm,

G: It's, you know, if I find something, I'll buy it and that happens probably more often than it should! [laughs]

S: Yeah, um, so how expensive are your...is each item usually, what's the general price point when you buy stuff?

G: I, I, I really struggle spending over...I mean, if I spend £50 on one item it's an expensive item.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm, I've got a, a, my bag, that I bought recently, erm, I got in the design outlet in, erm, Wembly, and it was 150 quid and then it was 50, 50% off and then I got another discount because it had a scratch on it.

S: Mmm,



G: Erm, and so I got an expensive bag for £50 and I was like, 'ah that's nice' but to go and buy anything sort of, second hand or new for £50 would probably be too much, so I guess £20 - £50, but then if you can get a good jacket for £12 then, that's brilliant, you know?

S: Yeah,

G: So I guess, around that?

S: So you don't go out looking thinking 'oh this should cost this much' if you find it, are you more likely to consider it, or...

G: No I think I've definitely, I've seen, I've seen beautiful, beautiful things that I would love to buy before but I just, I'd have to really, I'd have to...I dunno, yeah I think I really consider the price, I really look at how much stuff costs.

S: Mmm,

G: Because I'm so used to going to car boot sales and second hand shops.

S: Yeah,

G: It makes the rest of the world look ridiculous!

S: That is true!

G: You know, like, it looks insane!

S: Yeah,

G: I bought a double breasted, Austin Reed um, dinner jacket, beautiful, like black, stunning, erm, in a charity shop down the road the other day for £12 and you can't buy a t-shirt in most shops for £12.

S: Yeah,

G: And I just, I, that, makes me think you're all carzy! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: I got this, this is £12, t-shirts should be £2 or £3.

S: Yeah,

G: But then, you know I don't like the, the um, you know I don't like Primark and those kinds of shops so I [pauses] I'm quite limited in terms of what I buy.

S: Mmm,

G: But then, having limited myself with a, you know, not really strict rules but some rules.

S: Mmm,

G: Um, it's actually much more exciting to go out looking for stuff because, you know you'll, you know, I'm not going to spend £45/ £50 on a t-shirt, but I'm not gonna go to Primark and spend £3 on one of their t-shirts.

S: Yeah,

G: So I'll go to Cancer Research and find like, a t-shirt for a couple of quid and that's the compromise.

S: Mmm,

G: Or, you know, I'll spend a bit more on, you know t-shirts if they're like, you know, eco friendly, organic, fair trade, bamboo cotton, you know, that kind of stuff, um, so yeah, it's finding a balance between what, what seems reasonable and what is ethical I suppose.

S: Yeah and how easy or difficult do you find to part with clothes?

G: Oh nigh on impossible!

S: [laughs]

G: I threw some stuff....[laughs] I threw some stuff away the other day, um, and it hurt, like, it was really painful erm, but you, you grow out of stuff, you, things get replaced, I, I try now, I have one rail of jackets, it's erm, now I try and keep it to that otherwise it would just spill over, and, I love the idea of one day having an apartment like Iris Apfel, just like rooms and rooms and rooms, but we have, you know, we just have a flat so, um, I try and keep it that, so if I buy a jacket I've gotta know that, one of the other ones is gonna get it...

S: [gasps]

G: [laughs]

S: A one in, one out policy?

G: Yeah it's almost that and it doesn't always work and sometimes, um, yeah, sometimes they get to stay, but um, I um, I'm getting better at being a bit harsher

only because that my friend Sarah said I had a hoarding problem...and she's a massive hoarder!

S: [laughs]

G: [laughs] So, so there's panic stations! I had to get rid of some stuff, um, you know, you have to go through, I've got, um I've got every pair of jeans from, I guess when I was 16, so I have like my, my 16 year old self, I have those jeans.

S: Yeah,

G: And then when I went to St Martins and did my foundation course I've got those dungarees and then when I went to Goldsmiths I got a pair of baggy jeans that I used to wear in the studio and I've kept those.

S: Mmm,

G: And I have, I don't know, 5 or 6 pairs of jeans from 16 – 30 that have just been, like, my work jeans.

S: Yeah,

G: And I'm not, I'm not going to get rid of them and I know people are like, they'll rip, no you can't wear them, they've got holes in them, they're moth eaten,

S: Mmm

G: But they're, they're really special, um, you know, it's easier to part with some stuff than it is with other stuff.

S: Mmm,

G: And there are some things that, you know, I'll throw away something I still wear.

S: Yeah,

G: But I won't get rid of those and I don't wear them anymore you know?

S: Mmm,

G: It's a, tricky conversation I guess that I have with myself.

S: Yeah, what kinds of items do you find it easy to get rid of then?

G: Basics so...

S: Mmm,

G: So, you know, well hang on I've said that...[laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Erm, I got this, I got this polo neck because my old one, the old one that I'd had for like, I'd worn it for a good 5 years,

S: Yeah,

G: But it was like ripped, you know where you put your thumb?

S: Yeah,

G: You chew it and the thumb goes through then that on both sides then it ripped and then it was like torn there [gestures to his back] and I was like this is now an un, it's an unwearable piece of clothing.

S: [laughs]

G: Then I was like "But I've had it for 5 years!" and then I got this one and this one I was like, I was really like "Oh, god, like you're not quite the same" erm, but we've, you know that's managed to, you know I've managed to do that. Erm, but yeah, like t-shirts I get rid of quite regularly, erm, and then, yeah I don't think anything is easy to get rid of erm, I've, I've started trying to be a lot more discerning about the things that I keep.

S: Mm,

G: Because I have, not that I'm much wealthier than I was when I was an art student but there was, you know, stuff that you buy and like really tatty jewellery and like, stuff that you pick up and you wear and it gets really like, naff.

S: Yeah,

G: And you look at it one day and you're like this is just a...you know, it's, crap, I'm gonna get rid of that.

S: Yeah,

G: And I'm going to replace it with you know something more beautiful something more lasting, something that I'll have forever.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm, I go through sunglasses like you wouldn't believe, I bought erm, I think I bought 5 pairs last year, and most of them broke and one of them, a friend

borrowed the other day and she looked way better in them so I gave them to her, so that was it, the last one is gone! [laughs]

S: That was it, do you need more?

G: That was it! Need more now!

S: Same, I don't know, why would you buy designer sunglasses? Cause they just...

G: They just go.

S: They just disappear.

G: They disappear, it's ridiculous, there's something about them!

S: Yeah,

G: But I do want like a big pair of like, you know, like a fat pair of Chanel's or something,

S: Mmm,

G: One day!

S: Maybe...maybe in the Cancer Research shop?

G: [laughs] Exactly, absolutely!

S: So which clothes do you find it most difficult to get rid of? We've, so you've said basics are easier, but which ones do you find it harder to...

G: Jackets are tough to get rid of, erm, and, and all the...I mean, not the, I suppose not clothes so much but like fabric,

S: Mmm,

G: I find fabric very difficult to get rid of, I've got, when we were erm, we were in India and I bought loads of saris and I don't wear, I don't wear them as saris.

S: Mmm,

G: I usually use them to, like, you know, wear at festivals as like shawls or whatever.

S: Yeah,

G: And because they're so compact...it's very easy to keep them and never have to get rid of them! [laughs]

S: So small! [laughs]

G: There's too much space for them erm, yeah jackets and jewellery. I find, jack...jewellery I don't really tend to get rid of I...if I lose it, it goes. I have quite like a zen approach to jewellery when it runs away it's done with you and you can't get upset about it, um, but throwing jewellery away, I don't, um, anything I get rid of I give to charity anyway.

S: Umm,

G: So I feel it goes back into the system.

S: Yeah,

G: I was in Angel once and I picked up this beautiful shirt and I was like "Oh my god this is amazing this would look so good on me....

S: [laughs]

G: And then I was like...this is my shirt, [laughs] that I had donated and was about to re-buy it! [laughs]

S: I would have loved it if you hadn't realized until you got home!

G: Yeah like come home and been like, 'Oh shit' you know like, [laughs] just impossible! [laughs]

S: [laughs] Oh my gosh, erm, so, can you show me your treasured garment?

G: Yes, I can [gets up from his chair] erm, shall I make some space on the bed?

S: Yeah sure,

G: So this was the first one I was gonna show you...I don't even know why it's not...oh god it's got wax spilled all over it, that's not very good...is it any good like that [laid out flat on the bed] or do you want me to put it on?

S: Either, whichever, whatever you want.

G: [puts on jacket] So this is a jacket that my Mum's friend gave to me, he worked in fashion and TV I think.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm, and did lot's of like, styling for film,

S: Yeah,

G: Erm, and he, used to give me bags and bags of clothes when, erm, I was a kid, and this was one of the pieces I never, I never really liked it, it didn't really suit me,

S: Yeah,

G: I think I was going through a goth phase when I got this.

S: Mmm,

G: So I wasn't, I was like "Mm, that's a bit like, I don't get it" But, it's Helmut Lang, and I looked up Helmut Lang and I was like "Oh, this is a fancy jacket." [laughs]

S: Yeah,

G: So I kept it, but I never really wore it, and it was only when I got to London that I was like, actually this is quite cool.

S: Mmm,

G: And now, I've just, I don't know the, the denims gone a funny texture and the pockets are all ripped out and, it's kind of like, a little snug.

S: Mm,

G: But it's just, it is definitely one of my favourite items and I love Helmut Lang anyway, erm, I think it's fabulous clothing and it was just, I think it was the fact that it grew on me,

S: Yeah,

G: Like, I didn't like it at first.

S: Mm,

G: And then I didn't know how to wear it and then I used to wear it and it always used to look stupid, and then I remember going out one day with my friend Nick and then I like put this on with a really ripped up pair of jeans and some big cowboy boots and I was like "Oh! There you are!" Like...

S: It works?

G: Like that bit in Peter Pan when they're like 'There you are Peter!' [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Erm, so yeah, I think this is like, one of my, this is my most precious jacket I would say.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm, out of, out of all of them [gestures towards the rail of jackets]

S: How many jackets do you have?

G: Erm, I could do a quick count?

S: Yeah thanks,

G: I can do, like a roll call?

S: And all jackets live on this rail?

G: No, that was a lie! [laughs]

S: I thought jackets only lived in one place?

G: They dooooo! [mock sad voice] [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: But they spill over!

S: Except the ones that live in there [looks at wardrobe]

G: Except all of these [opens wardrobe to reveal more jackets]

S: [laughs] There's loads more in there!

G: Yeah but most of these ones are A's. [his partner]

S: Oh, Ok.

G: So I only have a couple of choice ones in here...25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, oh my god, 30! Dead on 30.

S: There you go.

G: ...there might be one in the kitchen! [laughs]

S: Some others?

G: With the...yeah, I reckon about 30, which I don't think it too bad.



S: No,

G: Like, you know?

S: I've got at least 10 coats, that's not including like sports jackets and other things so...

G: The, you know, out of all of those I don't have a single waterproof jacket! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Like I don't have anything...

S: For when it rains?

G: Anything practical, like, none of them, erm, yeah they're not like, I don't think about it like that really. Erm, right, my other one that I was going to show you is this guy [holds up a blue striped men's formal shirt covered in paint]. So this is my erm, it's like my scenic art shirt, so we all wear, we all have like...[puts on shirt] in the business, a set of clothes that we wear when we're doing, like, messy painting jobs.

S: Mmm,

G: And my [laughs] this is so messed up, my, I went to visit my Dad once, and he doesn't really like the way I dress he's very conservative, so, erm, he lent me a shirt to wear to dinner with some of his friends and I kept it, and then, I didn't have anything to go painting in and I just kind of grabbed it, I didn't really think about it.

S: Mmm,

G: And then this happened to it! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: And this was like 3 years later, like, erm, and it's...what I like about it is that it's got all that I, I sort of remember where all the different paint comes from because of the different colours, so different companies and different jobs. [gestures to different marks of paint on the shirt]

S: Yeah,

G: And it's got kind of different...and it's like, it's terrible, it's ripped to pieces, it's got no buttons, it's like, I...most people would have throw this away a long time ago.

S: Mmm,

G: But A. I still use it for work and B. I think it's quite beautiful, just as an object it's quite a beautiful thing you know, it's like a, like a little abstract canvas [lays shirt down on bed] I think it's, I think it's cool, and it actually goes really well with this jacket. [Helmut Lang jacket previously discussed]

S: Oh, like a outfit?

G: [laughs] Yeah! Like, quite often that's my...I do that and then that with a t-shirt underneath or something.

S: Yeah,

G: And what was the other one? I was going to show you, 3 right?

S: Yeah, yeah,

G: Is that about right?

S: Yeah that's fine,

G: This is where all the like, bits of fabric and stuff live, and hidden down here somewhere is this beautiful skirt.

S: Oooh,

G: Which again, time has not been kind to the old girl, it's a bit like, torn up round the hem.

S: Oh yeah at the bottom,

G: But it's erm, it's a, it's a skirt that you would normally wear under an Indian outfit, a woman would wear under an Indian outfit.

S: Mmm,

G: And I found it in a shop in Walthamstow, there was a second hand Indian shop,

S: Yeah,

G: And I bought that, erm, I think for like, £15 or something, it was really cheap.

S: Mmm,

G: And then I wore it to like, loads of festivals and all that kind of stuff.

S: I was gonna ask, it looks like it's been to a festival.

G: It's been to a couple of festivals and the erm, yeah the dry cleaners down the road have always looked after it.

S: Yeah,

G: And they kind of, whenever it comes in they're like "Oh yeah, been to a festival?"  
[laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Erm, but actually I wear it quite a lot in town now,

S: Mmm,

G: It was one of the things, I think a lot of what happened with my personal style was going to festivals.

S: Mmm,

G: And then realizing, I love dressing like this.

S: Yeah,

G: Why can't I dress like this in town?

S: All the time?

G: And then I thought like, if everyone did that, if everyone who went to a festival...

S: Yeah,

G: Dressed like that all the time, it would be a really nice, colourful, beautiful fashionable city.

S: Mmm,

G: But I think lots of people go to festivals because they feel like they can't wear what they want to,

S: Yeah,

G: You know people...I have a creative job where I can wear whatever the hell I want,

S: Mmm,

G: Lots of people can't.

S: Yeah,

G: Erm, so I was like I'm just gonna start trying to wear clothes that I love all the time.

S: Mmm,

G: Because I think that's, that's important to how you feel long term isn't it?

S: Yeah,

G: Put that back in there. [moves the box that the skirt was in]

S: Right, erm.

G: I found this amazing fan yesterday,

S: Oh nice,

G: How good's that? [shows the fan] And it goes with that. [long blue Indian skirt]

S: [laughs] So can you tell me, um, how often you wear each of the garments?

G: Erm, I guess the jacket [moves bag from on top of it] let's put that on the floor, the jacket this is, this is my kind of go to.

S: Mmm,

G: This is fairly regularly like, a couple of times a week, um, especially at this time of year [late Spring] erm, cause it's not...it's quite light, it's cool.

S: Mmm,

G: But also like it's just, it's such like a lovely feeling,

S: Yeah?

G: Like every time I put it on it's like a lot of memories, it's a lot of history.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm, so that I would say, you know like, a few times a week, this skirt, I mean, it needs to go to the dry cleaner but, erm, I wear this on quite special occasions, I often like, if I'm going to a party or if I'm going out dancing.

S: Mmm,

G: Or you know, if I'm going to a festival thing so erm, probably on average once a month I would say.

S: Yeah,

G: And then this shirt, because I work in it I wear this quite regularly,

S: Yeah,

G: This is probably every 2 weeks or so when I've got a painting job on.

S: Mmm,

G: I'll put that on, erm, so yeah, quite a lot, but then it's, I have, I have a lot of clothes but I feel like I wear all of them quite regularly.

S: Yeah,

G: Erm, because, cause, I suppose because lots of them are quite unusual I do tend to rotate them quite quickly.

S: Mm,

G: Erm, and also there's, yeah, they give me so much joy, and I don't...I also don't really believe in like special occasion clothing,

S: Yeah,

G: If that makes sense? I think if you love something you should wear it frequently and often and I'm always...I mean, it sounds like a brag, it's not meant to be like, I often show up to places feeling like, I'm a bit overdressed.

S: Yeah?

G: Because I'm like, I wanna wear this, like I don't, like I'm not...

S: Yeah,

G: You know, I'm not doing it for you, I wanna wear it because I love it. Like, and then people are like 'why are you wearing that?' And I'm like [makes noise] because I want to.

S: Aww, because it looks nice?

G: Yeah exactly.

S: Yeah, um, can you tell me about some of the memories you have from each of the garments? Memories of wearing them?

G: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so, I mean, this one [the blue shirt] I will always remember the dinner that I sat through with my Dad and his army friends, erm, talking about sailing. Um, and then all of the memories like, I did a job, we did a job, erm, with Bearded Kitten, erm, last year where we just...we spent a few days, we had to paint like loads of boards, just like, different colours, so it was erm, it was just quite an intense job, and all the different colours are on the shirt, erm, so that always reminds me of it. Erm, I remember ripping it, here [large tear on RHSAW] I was leaving, I was leaving the bedroom, too quickly and I was trying to stuff some stuff in our washing bag and I think there was a little snag in it, and I bent over and grabbed my bag and turned round and it got caught on the door handle.

S: Ahhh, oh no!

G: And A was in, A was in bed and I just like kind of, flopped out of the house! [laughs]

S: [laughs] Trying to be quiet?

G: Yeah exactly like 'ssssh' 'boom' like a fucking... you know, so yeah, like, all of that kind of stuff and then, I mean, I always remember buttons falling off, it happens to me so often, I'm quite like, I'm quite clumsy [laughs] and, erm, I'm always going through doorways too quickly.

S: Mmm,

G: And, like shit will rip off and like I've lost so many buttons over the years and you always just remember that 'ping' noise and then you're like, I'm in a rush and I don't have time to look. Erm, and then, oh my favourite memory of the skirt, and I actually have a really nice photo of it somewhere...

S: Oh, can you send that to me?

G: Erm, I should be able to find it, I'm not sure if I've got it or my friend Laura might have it, erm, but I've got erm, do you know what veil fans are? So they're erm, they're fans, like Chinese fans, but they've got like silk, coming off them,

S: Oh cool.

G: And, I dance with them [gets up to look in wardrobe] a ba ba ba, lemmie see if I can find them,

S: Ahhhh,

G: So like these things [gets them out, moves them around] um, and they um, I dance with them cause there's, there's a group of erm, there's a group called Shotgun Carousel and they do lots of, erm, festival and immersive theatre and stuff like that and they threw a party at The Vaults in Waterloo. And I just rocked up, like, I wasn't working with them, erm, but I was wearing that skirt and I had these fans, erm, and my mate Su Lin kind of shoved me onto the stage!

S: [laughs] When being overdressed works?

G: Yeah exactly [smiles] Finally wearing the right thing! And I just remember spinning the fans round and the skirt like, billowing out and spinning round, erm, and it was just so much fun, it was all, it was one of those like, it was one of those moments when you're like, this looks great [laughs]. But also, you know, which is terrible, erm, but, erm, but it was just so much fun and we were all laughing and it was beautiful it was just like, really like, you know glittery and like the party was amazing and everyone was lovely and it was just, it was just joyful.

S: Mmm,

G: And I think whenever I've worn that it's just given me joy, just makes me really happy and it's funny because so many people, not loads of people, but, you know, you do get the occasional...someone says something because you're wearing weird clothes.

S: Mmm

G: Or, you're like, the person wearing something odd and I'm just like mate, if you don't find this, like, fucking brilliant then, what's the point. Like, it's beautiful, look at the stitching, look at the stitching, erm, yeah I love it and I think it's er, it's a shame that people feel like they can't be more adventurous with what they wear because it makes me really happy I think [smiles].

S: You've told me where you've bought all of these haven't you? Or how they came into your possession?

G: Erm, yes, this [Helmut Lang Jacket] was given to me by my Mum's friend, this [Blue shirt] was forced on me by my father and this [Blue Indian skirt] was bought in a charity shop in Walthamstow.

S: Fab.

G: Which has closed down and been turned into a nail salon!

S: Nooooo!

G: I was really sad I went the other day and I was like, What?!

S: [laughs]

G: [laughs]

S: And, what's your reason for keeping all of these things?

G: Erm, I guess loving them, I mean that's, I mean, I, I'll get it dry...I should have had it dry cleaned before we did the interview but, that does need a dry clean, but it's not as bad as [laughs] it's not as bad as it looks!

S: [laughs]

G: Erm, I mean that, I still wear it, I love it, I mean the colour, the fabric, like everything about it is just, so spectacular, I mean even, even if I didn't wear it anymore that's, that's one of the ones I would keep.

S: Mmm, yeah.

G: That's, I think that's part of my...you asked earlier about what goes and what stays?

S: Yeah,

G: And I think that even if that didn't fit, or it was ripped or, you know like, I can sew so I'd mend it but...

S: Mmm,

G: You know even if I didn't wear it anymore I would keep it, like, I think it would be beautiful pinned into a box frame and like, you know, archived like that, like it's a...I would just always want to keep it.

S: Mmm,

G: This, same thing, um, it's, it's a funny story, it's ridiculously trashy and, I just, it's really beautiful cotton as well, I really love, I love it, erm and this one and I mean, I always and this is another problem...with the jacket thing.

S: [laughs]

G: Because even when they stop fitting, you're like, but my kids will wear it and it'll be vintage! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: You know you're like, this is [the Helmut Lang Jacket] definitely a 'my kids would wear it'.



S: Mmm,

G: You know it's erm, it's probably the most designer thing I own like, and it's not, that's not why I love it but Helmut Lang is a really cool.

S: Yeah,

G: Like historically, in terms of fashion history [he's] like a really important designer and I think having, you know, especially having been given a garment,

S: Mmm,

G: It's so special because you're like wow, someone parted with this and now I'm like, I would never part with this, I can...you know like,

S: Yeah,

G: I think being gifted clothes and lots of...I got...I get given lots of stuff for like, Birthdays and Christmas and stuff because people know that that, that brings me joy and I think it's a very special thing to, understand someone well enough to be able to give them appropriate clothing.

S: Yeah,

G: Erm, that they're gonna love and wear, and I think that was, it was sort of fortuitous because at the time that I got given it I didn't like it and I didn't want to wear it and then I grew into it.

S: Mmm,

G: And I think the person who gave that to me knew that, in a way.

S: Ah, really?

G: Yeah I think um...he was a gay guy and I'd just come out and my Mum wasn't dealing with it great, she was, she was being great but she was finding it difficult, and erm, you know, he was like, look, here's some cool clothes, like,

S: Yeah,

G: Pick it up, and I think, I think he probably knew like, you might not wear it now, but, that'll, that'll be good for you.

S: Yeah,

G: And I think that was...it was a nice, it was a beautiful thing to happen. That's a keeper! Erm, yeah.

S: And when did they become thought of as treasured or special to you?

G: Erm, I think when I bought that, when I bought that one [blue Indian skirt], I was in the shop and I was like, this is a special thing.

S: Mmm,

G: Maybe not, not as in...I wasn't as emotionally attached as I am now, but I remember seeing it and just thinking of it as a, as a work of art, I was like, that is a beautiful thing and I, you know, all the avarice in the world, I was like I want it.

S: Mmm.

G: Erm, this [Helmut Lang jacket] became special, I remember going out wearing this in a pair of ripped up jeans, with like, dolls cable tied into my hair which I'd really back brushed erm, and I was with my friend Nick, and we had...I had like loo rolls, like you know the cardboard tubes that loo rolls are on?

S: Yep.

G: All quiffed into my hair and we just went out we got annihilated and we were sat...and I remember, like, seeing a photo of myself, smoking like a long menthol 'More' cigarette,

S: Mmm,

G: You know the ones with the brown thing?

S: Yeah,

G: With all these like, dolls in my hair and wearing this jacket and I was like I fucking love that jacket! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: You know like? So that was that moment and erm, and then this shirt, weirdly, I erm, the shirt only really became, I only started thinking about it when you came round and we started talking about your project.

S: Mmm,

G: And I was actually thinking about what's special to me,

S: Yeah,

G: I went round the room and I was like, ok what's super special and I saw this and I was like yeah that makes the cut.

S: Yeah,

G: That's a really...it's my, it's my Dad's shirt and I've wrecked it, but I love it, like,

S: Mmm,

G: You know it's, um, yeah, so that was like, with some thought behind it.

S: Yeah,

G: When we started discussing it I guess.

S: And how do you feel when you're wearing each of the garments, is it a different feeling in each one?

G: Yeah, erm, when I'm wearing the shirt I'm normally feeling really stressed because it's my work shirt so I'm like, shit!

S: [laughs]

G: Erm, the, the skirt makes me feel incredibly powerful like when I'm walking along and it swishes.

S: Mmm,

G: And you just get that really like, 'Fuck you all' like...this is...you know, it's a very, very empowering piece of clothing erm, and the jacket, the jacket's just like, erm, it's like utilitarian comfort.

S: Mmm,

G: You know, just like, I mean, I guess practical, it's not terribly practical, it's not warm or waterproof or anything, it's like, it's cool, but like, but yeah, I feel like, purposeful.

S: Yeah,

G: When I wear that, I'm like, 'right, I've got shit to do,' like, I'm not...you know, I'm not super dressed up,

S: Mmm,

G: I'm just like, I'm wearing something I love,

S: Mmm,

G: I can achieve anything, you know?

S: And, I know you mentioned it briefly, but, what's the future for all of these items?

G: The kids get this [Helmut Lang Jacket], um, this [Blue shirt] will eventually decay [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Because it happens with all the best, all the best shirts.

S: Aww,

G: Erm, I...I definitely know that there will come a time when I'm on a job,

S: Mmm,

G: And it's so ripped and so torn and so broken that it will just transmogrify into, like, like a cloth you know?

S: Oh yeah! [laughs]

G: It will become a cloth [laughs] and I like that about it, it's got, it will become a pur...a sort of more useful object.

S: Yeah,

G: Then, lots of...I mean...it's...you could almost do like a Pixar movie about them,

S: Yeah,

G: Like Toy Story like, you...you see people with like rags that they're, like, doing beautiful like rust textures on walls,

S: Yeah,

G: In the theatre and like all these amazing textures, and you, you can ask people, you're like 'what did that used to be?' [laughs]

S: [laughs]

G: Like, my grandmother's scarf!

S: Awww,

G: Erm, and they do, like, it's really like, and you...it's incredible the different textures, look, if you scrumple something up,

S: Yeah,

G: And then get paint on it and then do that [demonstrates dabbing motion with shirt] it's beautiful.

S: Mmm,

G: And if you get knitwear and then dip it in paint and then do that [demonstrates dabbing]

S: Oh really?

G: Yeah and you can...you can see people using all of their old bits of clothes sort of like, torn down.

S: Mmm,

G: Erm and using them beautifully to make different effects, erm, as scenic artists.

S: Yeah,

G: It's like...it's really...I love that, you know, because one day it'll just become a, a muddy bit of cloth in the bottom of paint thing.

S: Yeah,

G: That still gets used for years, and I think that is part of the, the kind of recycling, reusing.

S: Mmm,

G: Thing that I really love that's, it's nice that it has that, to look forward to, erm, and this one [blue Indian skirt], I don't know, like, it's gonna one day, it's gonna get so...I mean, I need to start looking after it better but I think its, I think its festival time might be coming to an end, erm, it's got a couple more dry cleans then it might hit a box frame, you know I think it would look really nice hanging in a big [makes frame shape with fingers] frame over the bed [laughs] erm, but yeah I mean, you know, like I said I don't think I'd ever wanna get rid of that.

S: Mmm,

G: It's erm, it's really special [to partner who has just walked in] are you going? I love you baby, mwah!

A: Bye!

S: See you!

G: Oh you've got to transcribe that! [laughs]

S: Yeah,

G: That gets transposed! [laughs]

S: Erm, is there a garment that you wished you still had that you would treasure if you did have it?

G: Yes, yeah my Mum, made my brother and I, my older brother and I, my little brother never got one because he was 6 years behind us, but when, erm, before my parents got divorced and when we kids so I would have been, I don't know I guess about 6, and E would have been 7 or 8, my older brother, um, my Mum made us, like, cloaks.

S: Mmm,

G: But like beautiful...I think mine was maroon and Ed's was dark, like royal blue velvet cloaks with like fake fur.

S: Oh wow,

G: Like, um...and we....and....and like stuck loads of gems on them.

S: Mmm,

G: And they were just these beautiful, like kids dress up...classic dressing up box.

S: Yeah,

G: Things, um, they were beautiful and I don't know what happened to them and erm, I think to have held onto some of that kind of stuff would have been...I'm sure they got given to, you know....the, the younger cousins.

S: Mm,

G: Or some younger friends of ours.

S: Yeah,

G: Or, you know, which is again a nice thing, it's better that stuff gets used than put in a box for years, but that would have been a nice thing. And the other thing I had,

yeah I had a big baggy pair of black Criminal Damage jeans, like really baggy ones, really fat ones.

S: Nice, I remember those!

G: Yeah, yeah like you know, everybody, everybody had a pair! Um, I got, white acrylic paint,

S: Mmm,

G: And rubbed it between my hands and like [slaps legs] put hand prints all over them.

S: Yeah,

G: And they were just like, they looked, they looked ridiculous!

S: [laughs]

G: And I thought I was being so cool and so, kind of alternative, um, and I'd just like, rock around with like, hand prints all over my jeans, erm, and it looked stupid, but at the time I fucking loved it, and erm, to have those...

S: Yeah,

G: As a like, 'I was this silly once' would have...would be really nice you know.

S: Yeah,

G: Erm, they were cool.

S: Is there anything else you'd like to add about you clothes, about your treasured garments?

G: Erm, I think that covers it, I think um, I think I like, I think they, I think they highlight the sort of eclectic way that I look at clothes quite nicely.

S: Mmm,

G: I mean these two, [jacket and shirt] I mean you could definitely wear these two together, but I love, for instance I love, I love that together [jacket and skirt] I'd love to wear the skirt with the jacket, I do occasionally, I like to wear the skirt with the jacket because cause it's kind of like,

S: Mmm,

G: You know, structure and like tailoring vs loose,

S: Mmm,

G: You know, fabric and embroidery and I like...um, I don't know they're, I think they're treasured because they do different things and they mean different things.

S: Mmm,

G: And I like that, that clothes can do that.

S: Yeah,

G: You know, I think it's not something lots of...certainly my parents don't recognize that they're like, you wear clothes to look appropriate, to go to work in.

S: Mmm,

G: And I'm like, that's definitely not why I wear clothes! [laughs]

S: Yeah,

G: Um yeah but I think that's it really.

S: Would you be able to pick a favourite out of the 3?

G: [pauses] [sighs] I guess it would be the...do you know what, it would be the jacket, every time.

S: Mmm,

G: I think the jacket, it's, it's been with me the...time is a weird one for me with clothes.

S: Yeah,

G: Like, a lot of the time, I've had that for...I've had that for 15 years now.

S: Mmm,

G: And, it, we've been through a lot.

S: Yeah,

G: You know like and it's weird to talk about clothes like that.

S: Mmm,



G: But, erm, you know it's, it's the one I wear the most often, it's the one I use the most frequently,

S: Yeah,

G: It's been with me the longest, erm, so yeah if I had to pick a favourite, erm, it would be the jacket [mock whispers] sorry guys! [laughs]

S: Sorry other clothes [laughs] Ok, great, thank you.

G: Cool, no worries.

-----ENDS-----

## 10.5 Morgan Interview Transcript

S: So to start with can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

M: Sure, um, my name is Morgan, I turned 30 last month [smiles], erm, I work in charity, erm and live in this flat with my husband who I've been married to for just over a year, erm, I'm American...obviously [laughs]. Erm, I grew up on the east coast of Florida of erm America, in Flordia, and then lived in New York City and a few other places erm, and came to London to do a Masters degree and then erm, live here now, obviously, with my husband.

S: Where did you do your masters?

M: Er, at UCL [nods]

S: What was it in?

M: Erm, Global Health and Development.

S: Ooooh,

M: Ooooooh! [laughs]

S: And, erm, do you have family and friends over here, do you have any hobbies or interests?

M: Erm [loud noise outside] my interests are watching out the window to see what fights are going down [smiles] erm, I've got, obviously my husband here, erm, I don't have any other family here besides inherited family from getting married erm, I do have friends but all of them are pretty much from when I did school here.

S: Mm,

M: So, none of my like, childhood friends [laughs]

S: Yeah.

M: Erm, hobbies or interests I run quite a bit, I did my first half marathon this year which was fun and erm, probably just like hanging about, I like cooking a lot, baking, I've gotten into baking in the last couple of years.

S: Yeah.

M: Thanks to discovering Great British Bake Off when I lived here first time around erm, so yeah that would probably be it.

S: And how long have you been in this flat?

M: Erm, I've been here since last August so.

S: And how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

M: [takes deep breath] Erm, I...I really enjoy clothes and fashion, I like wearing clothes, erm my first job outside of uni was erm, working in public relations for a couple of different fashion brands I represented a men's, like, suiting brand which was really fascinating because it was like, all these things I'd never thought about like buttons on a men's jacket.

S: Mm,

M: Whether or not you should decide if you want 2 or 3 or what kind of tie variations you can tie and all this stuff, erm, so I did that for a long while and erm, I really, I enjoy it. I wouldn't say I necessarily like follow runway type trends of fashion, but I like seeing how things evolve and erm, just kind of, I dunno, it's been fun to sort of watch my own fashion kind of go through it's iterations.

S: Mm, so how would you describe your style then?

M: [makes confused face] Um, I tend to wear black [laughs] erm just because it's easy and I'm lazy, erm probably pretty classic I would say. I tend to not do too crazy a things with style but I enjoy finding things that like I feel really good in and, erm, that might be a little bit different in some way, erm, but not, I'm never really one to go completely crazy although I do have a few sparkly skirts that are always fun to wear. [smiles]

S: Mm, so how has your style changed and evolved do you think?

M: Erm, I think it's mostly just been like recognizing what I feel the best in and kind of, accepting that, rather than trying to fit into whatever's going on around me if that makes sense? Erm, so, I mean, definitely changed since moving to England I'd say because, erm, I was probably a bit preppier in America

S: Mm,

M: Especially like growing up as a teenager that was, like popper polos, like putting up your polo collar and horrifying things looking back now but erm...

S: And did you do the, the jumper tied here [round shoulders] rather than...

M: [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: I personally, do think I did that a few times...it's embarrassing, erm [laughs] yeah er, like all the boys in my high school had like little embroidered shorts with embroidered creatures on them and things, it was awful!

S: Oh?

M: Yeah, erm yeah so I think it...it's mostly just been actually like going into a store and looking at some dress and acknowledging like, I can really enjoy that, but I also know it's not something that's going to work for me or that I would, you know, particularly like wearing, so I think that's sort of been a nice place to get to in fashion of my life.

S: Yeah, um, what's like an average outfit for you then?

M: Mmmm, I would say most days I grab a pair of black jeans, erm and then usually a fairly simple top and then I, I like wearing a lot more jewellery probably and doing that as sort of the way to make an outfit feel different erm, yeah I mean literally today I wore black jeans and a black t-shirt and a big necklace so...[laughs] yeah!

S: Yeah and erm, how often do you purchase clothing would you say?

M: More often than I should erm, I probably buy something at least, I'd say at least once a month, erm, it just depends, I can have like, splurging months,

S: Yeah,

M: Where every week I'm buying something fun but I would say probably, probably once a month is a good average.

S: So what were the last 3 things you bought?

M: Ooo, erm, well we went on holiday last month so I bought a really fun one-piece bathing suit to wear, erm, then I bought...[pauses], I can't remember...it was mostly all vacation based things.

S: Mm,

M: Erm, a new pair of black jean shorts [laughs] because I couldn't steer too far from my norm!

S: [laughs]

M: Erm, and ah, what else, I can't think of anything else other than that.

S: Erm, ok, and where do you purchase clothing from?

M: Erm, Zara is a place I probably tend to go to most erm, H and M for kind of like, simple things, erm, there's a store called 'Anthropologie'?

S: Oh yeah,

M: It's newer over here but it's existed in America for ages and that used to be a big go to for me but it's a bit more expensive here. Erm, I think at the moment I'd say...oh, And Other Stories, that's another place I quite like to buy things...yeah.

S: Mm, and how expensive are, is each item? Like the general price points of the clothes you buy?

M: Erm, I would say if it's something that I'm buying to wear pretty frequently I don't mind spending, I don't know, maybe, like £40 like on a pair of jeans or something I wouldn't have an issue spending a little bit more, or like a nice top or something for work that I'd wear but...yeah it just depends really, it's like...if it's amazing, if it's something that I really know I'll love wearing and that it will last me well, I'll...I don't have an issue spending...I mean, I'm never a big spender...

S: Mm,

M: But I'd say like, I wouldn't mind spending a 100 quid or a little bit more on some...like a nice dress to wear to a wedding or something.

S: Yeah,

M: Erm, or like, 200, but I'd say most of those like, monthly shops are probably things that are somewhere between like 20 and 40. [pounds]

S: Yeah so what would be an...an expensive purchase for you?

M: Mmm, erm, probably I think I would say I spend the most on dresses.

S: Mm,

M: Erm, because if I find one that I really, really like I don't...I like to just have a nice accumulation of fun dresses that I can have so erm, I would say generally I would spend about...I'm also having to translate in American money [laughs] because that was the last time I bought, probably the most expensive things...

S: [laughs]

M: Erm, yeah like £150 I think I would feel like, 'I really need to think about this purchase before I make it' and that would probably yeah, probably that to 200 [pounds] would be 'expensive' for me.

S: Yeah, so what are your dresses like, are they black like the other clothes you have or are they different?

M: No, no! They actually...I probably...I only have 1 black dress I think, they tend to be my fun things. I've got a floral one, like long dresses, I have short dresses, but I don't wear them very often on a daily basis I'd say.

S: Mm,

M: I do have several black dresses that are just casual that I wear but I guess in my mind I'm thinking like occasion type dresses.

S: Yeah,

M: Erm, and they tend to not be black and be a little bit more fun.

S: So when you say occasion dresses do you mean to wear to like...where do you wear them?

M: Erm, to like weddings, or erm, yeah mostly to weddings I would think, er, or like an event or erm like a...a thing that's happening that doesn't happen normally [laughs] if that makes sense? [laughs]

S: [laughs] something like outside of daily life?

M: Yeah.

S: Yeah.

M: Something where I want to like, feel special and I like getting dressed up for things and can like take the time to pick out my outfit and have shoes that I like and do my make up and my hair and all of that, that would be where I would wear those kinds of things.

S: Mm, ok, and how easy or difficult, oh we discussed that before erm, we put the camera on, erm how easy or difficult do you find to erm, get rid of your clothes?

M: Erm, I think in the last few years I find it much easier because I have done quite a bit of moving and erm, it started when I was leaving New York City after living there for four years and was just shipping all of my things back to where my parents were, erm, and like putting things in boxes, and because in Manhattan I was too cheap to take a taxi having to take it about 10 blocks so...

S: 10 blocks is a long way?!

M: Yeah! With boxes of all of my belongings to the post office, to then ship it home really taught me a good lesson in like, do I need this? No! [laughs] ok great! And, erm

so then doing that and then moving to England with only suitcases and things like that.

S: Mm,

M: So I, I've definitely gotten less, sort of sentimental and attached but there are certain things that like I can't imagine I would ever really get rid of, like the shawl I wore at my wedding, like, I don't really wear that ever and it...maybe I could pull it out every couple of years but obviously not going to get rid of that.

S: Mm,

M: But like following, like we were talking about before, following this Kondo thing [Marie Kondo's Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up] so it, it sounds really insane but when you give something a...when you decide to give something away, you are meant to like, acknowledge it, and like thank it for its service [laughs] and this sounds crazy but I was kind of doing that as I was going through some of my clothes last weekend and it was really nice to do because it kind of gives you that sense of going 'I know I'm getting rid of this thing that I really did love at one time and I can appreciate that, but I also don't need it anymore' and so I think I'm quite good at, at that, at least nowadays.

S: Yeah,

M: Sounds insane but...there's a lot of talking to my clothes last weekend! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: It was probably good no one else was here. [laughs]

S: Was there anything last weekend that you were surprised that you either threw away or kept?

M: Oh, erm, probably and this is stupid but, there's this belt, that is just a woven brown belt that I gave away but I've literally been traipsing it around with me since I was probably, I don't know, like 21, or something.

S: Mm,

M: Through all of these moves, I cannot remember the last time I wore it I have no idea why I kind of kept it and kept it and kept it but for some reason I guess I just kept thinking like what if I need a big brown belt to belt some dress...I don't even think it fits around my hips so it has to be like a [gestures to her waist] for a dress or something?

S: Yeah,

M: And I finally, I was looking at it last week and going why in the heck have I kept this for so long and I can't remember the last time...yeah, so I finally got rid of that which I don't...it just surprised me because it was kind of just going [makes face of disbelief] as I just said, I thought I was pretty good at getting rid of things [laughs] and then why is, why is this the thing I've been keeping? It's not even sentimental so...yeah.

S: Yeah, and where do the clothes go when you get rid of them, do they go to a charity shop, to friends, do they...

M: Yeah, usually to a charity shop erm, I think when I kind of was moving the last time I gave a bunch away to friends but for little like, kind of random cleans I tend to just donate them or recycle them if they're not in good enough shape.

S: Mm,

M: [nods]

S: Ok, so can you show me your treasured garment please?

M: Yes! [reaches to grab item] it's not black!

S: [laughs]

M: Which is a rare thing.

S: I'm just gonna check we're still filming...yeah we are.

M: So this is my treasured garment [opens out scarf] it's very simple, it's very soft, um yeah...this is it. [smiles]

S: Can you tell me about it?

M: Yes, erm, so this is a scarf that I got, I feel like there's a theme of me moving in this chat but um, so when I lived in New York City, which I moved there when I was just out of uni so I was 21 and had no idea what I was doing with my life and um, I found this woman that I worked with who was amazing, and she was about 20 years older than me and we just kind of clicked and became really good friends. And erm, I refer to her and her husband as my 'fancy friends' in New York because they are just like living this life that was so beyond what a like, hungry, young 20 year old was doing. Anyway, they sort of adopted me into their family for the time I was there and I'm still quite close with them and erm, when I decided to move erm from New York City to London to do my Masters degree erm, I'd never been to London before I had to get my passport to go on that trip. Erm, so it was a big one for me, and they sat me down before I left on the, like, last time I saw them and gave me this as a gift and it is a really lovely...it's Cashmere and I don't own anything that's Cashmere, so it feels very fancy. Erm, as sort of like a little kind of...I don't know, in my mind it was



like a little comforting travel buddy erm, and it's now become my airplane, travel must-have. Erm, I horribly forgot it when we went on this trip last time and I was like oh my god the planes gonna crash or something because I don't have my thing and like this is awful but it does... it's like, it's big enough, it keeps you warm, you can kind of use it as a blanket, it's very cosy, I literally don't think I ever actually wear it though because as I said, I'm not a huge, like, colour person. Erm, but yeah, that's what it's become for me.

S: And so where has it been worn?

M: Um, on a lot of airplanes, erm, I'm sure I've worn it...I've definitely would have worn it in New York City to see them,

S: Mm,

M: Whilst wearing it, erm, but yeah I would say mostly on...[laughs]

S: On airplanes?

M: On international airplanes flights and as well as like domestic ones in America erm, but yeah, lots of airports, lots of airplanes.

S: Yeah and so, ah my next question is how often is it worn so?

M: Erm, [pauses] well, I think it's interesting because since they gave it to me my life has included a lot more flying! [laughs]

S: Yeah [laughs]

M: Because I now live 1000s of miles away from my family and my family all live in different places now in America and they didn't at the time.

S: Right,

M: So I think now I kind of call on it quite a bit more than I would of done had they given it to me at a different point.

S: Yeah,

M: Erm, so I...probably [pauses] I dunno, maybe 4 times a year, 5 times a year.

S: Mmm,

M: But then, you know, double, because, there and back. [laughs]

S: Yeah [laughs] And do you have any particular memories of wearing it, any particular flights that you remember wearing it on?

M: Erm, definitely the first one, I don't know what it was that made me decide I wanted, because I have other scarves and things erm, and I always get cold on airplanes so I always have something.

S: Mm,

M: But for some reason I just decided like, well this was the gift, I'm going to bring it with me, and so erm, yeah getting...sitting on that plane I remember just like being very nervous about everything because I had no idea what I was doing and erm, just sort of wrapping this around me and kind of, reminiscing on my friends and the night we'd had and how lovely it was and thinking about exciting next steps and feeling very cosy and like comforted, so that would be probably the most significant time of wearing it but...[nods] [smiles]

S: And, oh I suppose, your reason for keeping it? I suppose because you need it on a plane?

M: Yeah,

S: Any other reasons for keeping it?

M: Um, I think it just reminds me...it's one of those things that every time I open my drawer and see it in there, even though, like I said, I don't wear it very often but that sense of just going like "[sighs] that was like, that was a good, that was a good choice I made." [laughs]

S: Yeah,

M: That was...I'm glad that I did the thing I did to make them give me this as a gift and it reminds me of the people that gave it to me and erm, yeah it was funny, I saw them at my wedding actually, they came, and I was telling them like, 'you guys don't even know but I...that scarf you gave me is now my like special travel scarf' and they were so excited to hear it and I was like 'no I literally can't get on a plane without it, now, it's...I love it and it's so comforting and wonderful' and like that's exactly who they are as human beings as well.

S: Mmm,

M: And I think yeah I...I just keep it because it's like the coziest thing of all time, like, literally and figuratively [laughs].

S: And so when did it, when did it become thought of as like treasured or special?

M: Honestly probably not until you put the question to us, which I'm sure you've heard a lot but, um, I knew it like...it would have never been something I gave away.

S: Yeah,

M: But I didn't think about it being like a really significant thing for me until I was kind of going through the idea of what would be a treasured garment to me and this was just the most obvious thing that popped into my mind without even having to think about it.

S: Mm,

M: So I guess yeah at that point really.

S: Yeah.

M: And now...it makes sense, like it made sense as I thought it.

S: Yeah,

M: But yeah, I mean I still, I definitely would say it is treasured but I don't know that I would ever use that word really to describe it?

S: Yeah,

M: On my own.

S: What word would you use?

M: [pauses] erm, this...so...probably 'cosy' because it's my favourite word of all time, it is like, the thing that makes me the happiest is being able to feel like cosy and comforted.

S: Mm,

M: Erm...like...yeah, I, it's a problem, I constantly like every time I come home and I'm like 'I'm going to put my cosys on' and my husband thinks I'm insane, um, but I think that word to me and the reason I would use it to describe it is that it's, I guess what I was saying just then about being like literally it is cosy.

S: Mm,

M: But it's that sensation of just being like, wrapped in love and like, cared for and that I think is sort of what's encapsulated inside of the...the magic of these threads [laughs]

S: And so, you've described how it feels, and how do you feel when wearing it?

M: I feel um, usually jetlagged...per the scenario, but I think um, like adventurous maybe? Um, or quite brave I think because that's sort of as I like wore it for that first

real time that was kind of what I was feeling and again it just kind of harkens back to every time I put it on just going like, you've made some good choices and they were scary and you've overcome them and it's ok, so yeah.

S: Yeah, and so what's the future for this item?

M: Hopefully many more years of airplanes erm, that's just really all I want it for and need it for.

S: Yeah,

M: It's just [laughs] my like...yeah, it sounds really insignificant but there's just something about, like being in a space that... I don't understand how airplanes fly.

S: Mm,

M: Like, I'm not a scared flyer, but it's such a nice thing to have, sort of, erm, like a continuous item that is sort of with you always [laughs] yeah.

S: I always wear the same shoes to the airport.

M: Do you?

S: They're really not very practical they've got like, wooden wedge heels and er they're mules so they don't have a back and they've got a little bit on the front.

M: Mmm,

S: And they're laced so when you're feet swell up you can take your feet out of the shoes really easy.

M: Nice, yeah ok.

S: And when they're swollen they will still go back in.

M: Yeah,

S: And you can walk ok in the wedge heel.

M: Yeah,

S: But no, no I'm similar I still...I'll pull them out at 5am run to the train station in completely inappropriate shoes! [laughs]

M: Yeah, yeah but it's just, but yeah cause it's like, I don't, it never matches what outfit I'm wearing, well I guess it does because I'm generally wearing something

quite neutral but I mean it's not like, if I were wearing a, like a neon yellow shirt I wouldn't have any qualms just putting this on with it. [laughs]

S: [laughs]

M: It's like well, that's just the way it is isn't it? I don't know. [laughs]

S: Erm, is there a garment that you wished you still had that would be your treasured garment if you had it?

M: Oh [pauses] erm, probably, but I have to think about it for a second...erm, I had this, well I don't have it anymore, I had this dress...so in America we have homecoming dances.

S: Mmhm.

M: And they start your first year of high school so you're 14 erm...

S: Oh right so you have them, it's not just like, right at the end?

M: That's Prom,

S: Oh, ok.

M: Yeah, Homecoming there's like a parade for it.

S: It's different?

M: Yeah it is different, it's in the fall, Prom is always the Spring, like right towards the end of your finishing year.

S: Ok.

M: Anyway, it was my first kind of big dance I got to go to and I was going with this boy that I was dating at the time that I was like, thought I was madly in love with, obviously, I was 14...so of course. Erm, and I went and like got to get my hair done for it and I could wear any make up I wanted and I got this dress that I was obsessed with and it was strapless, black...might have been when it started, erm, velvet, and then it kind of came down to about just below my knee and then sort of went out in this ruffle lace?

S: Oh yeah, I know what you mean.

M: Yeah.

S: Kind of like a fishtail?

M: Like a trumpet of lace that was asymmetrical so it was longer at the back.

S: Mm,

M: And something about that dress just made me feel...I was like 'I am the winner of everything' in this outfit, like I still look at the picture sometimes and I'm like that was a good choice, it just worked really well and I loved it and if I, I mean, if I could still fit into it, I would have kept it and worn it all the time because it was just...it was just a great dress, but yeah [smiles]

S: So why...why don't you have the garment anymore?

M: Erm, I guess because it was one of those that was like there will never be a time this will go on my body again! [laughs]

S: Awww, [laughs]

M: Because I mean, I was like a stick and had nothing at all and like, I think my Mum had to like sew boobs into it basically so that I like got to pretend I was older than I was! [laughs]...yeah, there was just never going to be hope that that was going to be re-worn and like I said, I try to be good about appreciating an item and moving on from it but, that was a good one.

S: Yeah, er, can you show me where you store your treasured garment please?

M: Yes...you're going to see my messy room...um, this is my wardrobe and I keep it, um, in here [opens drawer below wardrobe], but not with my other scarves, it lives here, in the back.

S: And why does it live there?

M: Erm, well honestly, partly space, also, because again, I don't like, pull for it and wear it very often, so I just need to know where it is as I'm packing.

S: Mmm, ok, and how is it cared for?

M: Erm, just by...I guess I just fold it up and keep it in a nice spot...I mean, it's Cashmere so it's gotta be like, you can't really throw it in the washer but to be honest, I don't know if I can remember the last time I had it cleaned...so just cared for with love and not much else. [laughs]

S: And is there anything else you'd like to add about your clothes? Or your garment?

M: Erm, don't think so, I don't think so.

S: Oh, actually, can you confirm that you've read and signed the consent form?

M: Yes, I have read and signed the consent form, I consent.

S: Ok, thank you very much.

M: Thanks.

-----ENDS-----

## 10.6 Zoe Interview Transcript

Z: I can't believe that came out of your bag! [referring to the tripod]

S: Ha, yeah,

Z: Like Mary Poppins.

S: Yeah, it's pretty cool, it wasn't so expensive and yeah, it slides up slides down.

Z: Mm,

S: It's really useful, be useful for like holiday photos and stuff....Can you just confirm your name and that you've read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form?

Z: It's Zoe [surname redacted] and yeah, I've signed the consent form and I've read the document you sent me.

S: Ok, perfect, thank you, and can you tell me a bit about yourself?

Z: So, I'm originally from Bristol and I've lived in London for...coming up to 3 – 4 years now. Um, went to university in Brighton and went to college, and obviously secondary school, in Bristol. Erm, and yeah, I've always wanted to live in London, I just like, I prefer like busy, I'm from like the countryside.

S: Mmhm,

Z: So I always prefer to be somewhere where it's really busy, erm, and, love fashion, I go out and just enjoy socializing, erm, I dunno, that's it. [shrugs]

S: Erm, do you have any hobbies? Friends? Family? Job?

Z: Yeah so my job, I'm an events assistant, for a creative events agency, we work with a lot of fashion, lifestyle and er, beauty er, clients.

S: Mmhm,

Z: Which is really fun, really fast paced. We do lots of like, press days, product launches, brand experience events, erm, fashion shows. Erm, I've got a brother, a Mum and a Dad, all my friends from Bristol have now moved to London,

S: Mmhm,

Z: Which is good and then all my friends from University were always...were also, like already living here, or have like, moved up here after uni.



S: Yeah,

Z: So like quite a really like, nice group of friends that are here, a lot of friends here er, and then like hobbies, I cycle to work, so like cycling is quite a big hobby, erm, I'm starting my own podcast so that's taking up quite a lot of my time.

S: Ah nice,

Z: I love listening to podcasts, erm, and any other hobbies...love cooking, erm and that's kind of it with hobbies.

S: Do you mind me asking how old you are?

Z: Er, 26.

S: Ok great, and what's your podcast going to be about?

Z: It's gonna be ah, educational conversational comedy. So we're gonna get a guest speaker each week erm, and each week we'll kind of like delve into a topic, and we'll also talk about like, current affairs, what's happened from like the last 2 weeks.

S: Oh great, that sounds really good.

Z: Yeah. [smiles]

S: Um, you already mentioned you love fashion but how do you feel in general about clothes and fashion?

Z: Erm, I feel like clothes play a massive part in my life and they take up a lot of time and money in my life. Erm, I feel like when, I don't feel like really comfortable, like really confident, or sometimes even like...it's really shallow, but if I'm not in like a really good outfit that I like, that I feel comfortable in or confident then, I won't be in a very good mood.

S: Mmm,

Z: So I feel like my relationship with clothes is, er....I guess a lot of people have it, but, it's just very...it's quite, intense almost, cause like, [laughs] cause always like, I spend so much of my time in the morning like, picking out my outfit,

S: Mmm,

Z: And then, for work, and then like, even more time if I'm like, picking an outfit to like go out, erm, so my relationship with clothes is very full on...but I love it, a lot, I'm always like, on the internet, like, looking at like the latest fashions, seeing like, what people are wearing, like trying then to recreate that look myself.

S: Mm, so where do you look for fashion inspiration?

Z: Erm, mainly ASOS has become, like, my number one, just because it's so easy to navigate round.

S: Mm,

Z: Erm, Instagram, I follow a lot of like, models and er fashion brands so a lot, like, kind of, I'll be scrolling through and I'll see like, an outfit that I like,

S: Mmm,

Z: And then, I'll try and find that online erm, and then I've got like, I follow a lot of...a lot of my friends are quite fashionable, erm, so if they put an outfit up, I'm like 'Oooh' [points and smiles].

S: Yeah, like "I can do that"?

Z: Yeah! [smiles]

S: So, how would you describe your style then?

Z: Erm, I think, it's a...kind of like... street style but a bit quirky and a bit messy, I'm never like, completely polished I'd say.

S: Mm,

Z: I like kind of wearing...if I'm not wearing like, block colours, I'll wear something that's really like mixed matched.

S: Mm,

Z: That...well I think that looks quite good [laughs] I don't know if others do, but I like kind of like, putting clothes together that you wouldn't think would go together.

S: Mmm, so what's an example of, like, a typical outfit that you might wear?

Z: Erm, so definitely a pair of trainers.

S: Mmhm,

Z: I'm never really in anything else, erm, I've got, a really cool pair of these like PVC black trousers which I've been wearing quite a lot recently, as it's got a little bit hotter I haven't [smiles].

S: [laughs] yeah...not this week and last week.

Z: Yeah and um, and then like a t-shirt with like a cool design on, um, and then some like, nice earrings and then I've got like, a really nice, um, big orange like aviator jacket,

S: Mmhm,

Z: Which is like, bright orange, bit like the colour of that um, pillow, um, so I'll wear that, or, I've got this really nice big puffa coat, that's kind of like, been a look of mine quite recently.

S: Yeah and so how often do you purchase clothing, we mentioned ASOS, yeah, so how often do you purchase clothing and where from and the general price point that you spend on each garment?

Z: Um, I probably spend, around £200 a month on clothes.

S: Mmhm,

Z: Even though it kind of pains me to say it, um, and yeah mainly ASOS or Depop, which is like, a second hand clothing app.

S: Mmhm,

Z: Which, I buy on there quite a lot, and then, Zara is a big one for me, H&M, um, but yeah mainly ASOS because they don't only do their own brand, they have loads of other brands.

S: Yeah,

Z: So it's really easy to like get like a variety of clothing, um, and yeah, per time, sometimes I can spend like £150 in one go, um, cause it's so easy to just, like, add stuff to your basket. [smiles]

S: Yeah, [laughs]

Z: And, I've got erm...with ASOS I've got premium next day delivery, which is next day delivery for the whole year for £7.99.

S: Mm,

Z: Er, so like, it's such a good marketing ploy...

S: Yeah,

Z: Because like, if I need like, I'm literally when I'm just on it, like if I see a pair of earrings or a top that's like a tenner,

S: Mm,

Z: Cause you don't, I don't like see the money cause it goes out of my paypal.

S: Yeah,

Z: I feel like I'm not spending money,

S: Mm,

Z: Especially as I get the delivery 'for free', [makes inverted commas with her fingers]

S: Yeah,

Z: Even though I've paid for it! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

Z: Um, but I also do, I also sell a lot of my clothes,

S: Mm,

Z: Cause I try and, I try and make sure, if I'm buying something expensive that I try to like sell something old so I can get a bit of cash for it.

S: Yeah, how much per item do you think you spend, so is that £150 on one thing or like, loads of things?

Z: Oh no, probably like £30 or £40.

S: Mm,

Z: But depends like, I bought a pair of trainers the other day and they were £125,

S: Mm

Z: Um, trainers are so expensive nowadays!

S: So expensive,

Z: It's mad,

S: So much money, so is that, is trainers some of the most expensive things you buy, do you buy anything more expensive?

Z: Probably like, trainers and coats, because I know that I'll like wear them for like a long time, so I had like, 2, I bought 2 coats this winter and they lasted me like, the whole of the winter.

S: Mm,

Z: And I'll probably like wear them next winter um, if I'm buying like, my Mum's best friend always taught me that when you're buying fashion...when you're buying something that's coming in on a trend...

S: Mm,

Z: Don't spend very much money.

S: Yeah,

Z: But if you're going to buy like, a pair of like, jeans that are going to last you forever, then you can spend over £100 so...

S: Good advice.

Z: Yeah, really good advice, [laughs] so if it's just like a t-shirt that I know I'm gonna like, be bored of in like, I dunno, a few weeks, then I probably wouldn't ever spend over £25 on it.

S: Yeah, and you mentioned selling some of your clothes, umm, how easy or difficult do you find it to get rid of your clothes?

Z: Umm, sometimes I do a car boot sale, I did one about 2, maybe about 3 months ago, and I think I probably made...I made about £300.

S: That's pretty good,

Z: Yeah um, but then on Depop it's a bit slow.

S: Mm,

Z: And I find it like, quite difficult and quite like mind numbing, and, at the end of the day you don't, I don't really get that much money for it.

S: Mm,

Z: Cause I don't like buy like designer clothes for example.

S: Yeah,

Z: A lot of my clothes, are just like, high street brands,

S: Mm,

Z: Erm, you can't really sell it for that much.

S: Yeah,

Z: But I do try, but then yeah, a lot of time...it's just a bit like, long going to the post office. [laughs]

S: Yeah, yeah, post office queues,

Z: And then like taking [the] pictures, [of the garments]

S: Mmm,

Z: And then people messaging you like, 'ah, can you send me a picture of it on' and it's like, ugh!

S: And then for 7 quid you get you're like, I may as well have not bothered, may as well give it to the charity shop!

Z: [laughs] Exactly!

S: I've done that with Depop as well, just like [sighs]

Z: Yeah! [laughs] just...then they're like can you send another picture of it from like, behind or something and I'm like, it's £4!

S: [laughs]

Z: Like, [shrugs shoulders, rolls eyes] no! [laughs]

S: Yeah, exactly. So you do you get rid of your clothes quite a lot and that's how you do it? Do you give your clothes to charity, do you give them away, or is it just buying and selling?

Z: Um, I try not to, like, I don't give any to charity, because I've got like, a big bag of clothes that if I don't think I'm going to make any money on Depop from them

S: Mm,

Z: I'll save them up and then I'll try and do, like, a car boot, like every like...

S: Yeah,

Z: Maybe every 6 months?

S: Mm,

Z: Erm, yeah I don't ever really give to charity I just... sometimes like my friend Tabs, my best friend Tabs, who hates shopping,

S: Mm,

Z: Who lives in Macedonia at the moment, whenever she comes home like, I always give her, like a few clothes.

S: Yeah,

Z: Because she...just begs me for them! [laughs]

S: My friend's done that as well, she lives in Isreal, she came back once and she was like 'I need...I need winter England clothes' and I was like 'Here's the bag...'

Z: Haha, yeah! [laughs]

S: The bag of clothes that everyone has, the bag of clothes that I can't be bothered to take anywhere, that I haven't sold...

Z: That's exactly what she does! [laughs], and she's like thank you! Then, on Instagram, you see her wearing it, like all the time! [laughs]

S: [laughs]

Z: And I'm like 'What would you do without me?!' [laughs]

S: It's really funny, yeah, she's still got like, some things I see her in and I'm like, I gave you that, like 5 years ago why are you still wearing it?

Z: [laughs] So funny. I wish I didn't have the relationship I have with clothes, I wish I was just...I guess clothes is a, is a hobby of mine.

S: Mm,

Z: Cause I feel like I just, I spend a lot of my money and time on it.

S: Yeah, and apart from your treasured object, are there things you keep that you wouldn't throw away, or are you quite easy going with things, like once you don't like them anymore or they don't fit or how do you have that relationship, do you tend to hoard? Or do you tend to just...

Z: I tend to like, throw a lot of it away, especially when I know I'm not going to wear it and just being like...

S: Mm,

Z: Especially if I haven't worn it in the last 6 months, erm, there's like, my treasured garment I won't throw away because of the rea...like, I guess we can go into that later?

S: Yeah,

Z: Erm, but, yeah no I'm not a hoarder really with anything else, erm, I feel like the new, the pair of trainers I've just bought, erm, I think I probably would keep them, but, like, Vans and stuff...

S: Mm,

Z: Like I wear a lot of Vans and like Stan Smiths,

S: Yeah,

Z: But I feel like, they get to a certain stage and you just have to buy another pair

S: Yeah,

Z: I don't have that much of an attachment to them.

S: Mm,

Z: But my new trainers, I feel like I will probably keep, just because I spent so much money on them.

S: Yeah, what are your new trainers?

Z: They're just like these Bronx trainers, there a bit like Balenciagas,

S: Oh yeah,

Z: They're just like, another make of those.

S: Mm,

Z: Um, so yeah, I'm probably being...I really like them, they're not everyone's cup of tea though! [laughs]

S: Ah, you'll have to show me after.

Z: Yeah I will.



S: Ok great, so can you show me your treasured garment?

Z: Yup, [reaches over, holds up bag]

S: And can you tell me about it?

Z: Yeah so, this is my favourite bag [opens it and looks inside as she speaks] and it's got the little chain [pulls out chain from inside the bag] so you can wear it, um, as like, a little handbag or you could just like, pop in open, put that in and wear it as like, a little cute bag [puts chain back in bag], um, so, [closes bag, puts it on her lap] my Dad bought one identical for my Mum,

S: Mm,

Z: For Christmas, like, probably, 8 or 9 years ago, and I remember like, she unwrapped it and I literally looked at it and I was I like I love that bag! That is so cute, it's so amazing, um, and he bought it from this antique shop in Cleavedon which is the little like town um, on the outside of Bristol,

S: Mmhm,

Z: Near the city, um, and he was just walking past there one day and they sell like old bits of jewellery,

S: Mmhm,

Z: Like antique jewellery, you know what it's like and he went in and there was like, I think like, 6 of these bags, but like, all different patterns and he bought one for my Mum and every time we would go somewhere like special, or like go out for dinner or anything like that I'd always be like, can I wear that, can I please borrow your bag?

S: Aw,

Z: And she'd be like 'Well I wanna wear it' and I'd be like 'Well I wanna wear it' so we...and I just never thought to, I don't know why but I never thought to myself like...cause I never really like, asked where it was from,

S: Mm,

Z: Until they bought me one, but I just, in my head, I just always thought it was so special so I never thought ah, I'll just go buy myself one.

S: Yeah

Z: And then, I remember that Christmas after um, they bought me one!

S: Aw

Z: And like, I opened it up and I was like oh my god it's like, I can't believe you've got me one...and then in my head I was like, why haven't I just gone and bought me one?!

S: [laughs]

Z: And I was like, it must be really expensive and like, I think it was like, £24.99 or something, but like, it's all like, handmade, like, hand...all these [the beads] are like, hand sewn on.

S: Mm,

Z: Um, and yeah I just, I just...I loved it and I loved that it was my Mum's and that I borrowed it from my Mum and my Mum has got...me and my Mum have got completely different like, fashion like, styles,

S: Mm,

Z: So I felt like, it was quite nice that I could like, borrow something from her,

S: Yeah,

Z: And we, we had this like...we just like shared this love for this bag.

S: Mm,

Z: Um and yeah when I got my own one I was just like, I was so over the moon, and whenever I like, still like...the, I'll only wear it out, when it's like, really, a really nice event um, and it lives on my wall, so all my other bags, are chucked into one big bag on the back of my door.

S: Yeah,

Z: And then this hangs on my wall as a bit of like, artwork.

S: Aw,

Z: [smiles] Yeah! In my room, and I just, I dunno, I just really love it [picks it up again and looks at it] I just, it's cute [turning it round], it's a bit nice, that my Mum, my Mum and me have both got together I guess and it was nice that there was only 6...bit broken [still turning the back, finds a loose thread] um, but, my Mum had this idea, she was like I'm gonna go buy another one and then when you have a daughter like, you can like give one to her.

S: Aw,

Z: Um so yeah, I just, I just love it, and, it's like really...ugly, but really cute, and that's like, just my fashion sense all over I feel.

S: Yeah,

Z: Like, it doesn't look quite right, but something...works...and that's my garment. Do you wanna look? [hands over the bag]

S: I'll have a look after, actually, yeah, I'll have a look now, thank you, aw, this is nice.

Z: But yeah, I would never let anybody borrow it.

S: Yeah, aw, it is nice, do you have any particular memories of wearing it? Of using it, like, which kind of events does it go to?

Z: I remember me and my Mum wore, we went, I took my Mum out for afternoon tea for Mother's Day a few years ago and we both wore it, um, and, when we went to this really fancy restaurant in the South of France, I wore it then.

S: Thanks. [hands back bag]

Z: But to be honest like it has...I dunno, I just...it has to be...like, I have to be wearing, like heels or something to wear this out, so it has to be quite a...in my eyes a 'fancy' event.

S: Yeah, yeah what's the criteria for taking the bag or not taking the bag?

Z: [laughs] um, I guess, like, as it goes with my...as long as I'm going somewhere where...people respect it.

S: Mm,

Z: Like, I wouldn't like, take it to the shops, or if I was going to take it to a really nice or bar or like a nice date for example,

S: Mm

Z: Then I'd...with somebody like, my boyfriend, I wouldn't like, wear it out on a 'date' date, I'd wear it out with my boyfriend, yeah, somewhere really special.

S: Mm, yeah, and do you still wear it?

Z: Yeah [nods]

S: Yeah, if the right, um...

Z: Yeah [laughs] if the right time comes!

S: The right occasion, and, how does it feel when you wear it or when you take it somewhere?

Z: Um, I just feel like, it's not a bag that anybody else has.

S: Mm,

Z: Cause, there were only 6 that were made, um, and my Mum's got one of them, so there's only 4 other people that have it.

S: Yeah,

Z: Which I think is quite nice, um, and I just feel like, really, like proper, and really cute and really, like elegant and like feminine.

S: Mm...and when did it become thought of as a treasured or special object? Was it always thought of that way or has it become more important as you've kept it?

Z: Mm, I think like, it's become more important...yeah, definitively become more important, but like, when I, when I got it like, I was so happy that I got it.

S: Mm,

Z: That, I always, like, straightaway knew that like, it would be treated very specially. [smiles]

S: Aw, um, [pauses] ok, great, can you show me where it's stored and tell me about where and how you store it?

Z: Yeah, shall I bring it or...?

S: Yeah, then you can show me how it looks on, the wall [walks to bedroom] hey, you've got the little room.

Z: Yeah, so...at the moment it actually goes here [on the back of her door] away from this one [the larger 'bag of bags' mentioned earlier] but usually it will like, go on my wall [gestures to wall] but I just need to put a, um, nail in or something, we're still doing...

S: Yeah, so does...

Z: But all the other bags live in here [gestures to large silver bag] so this one kind of...

S: Yeah in your other flats has it always lived on the wall as well?

Z: Yeah so on the, in my other flats I always put like a nail in the wall.

S: Mm,

Z: And I've always had it like, as a bit of like, er, yeah, bit of like artwork I guess.

S: Yeah, is that, why is that?

Z: Erm...I dunno, just cause, like, cause, like, again I feel like it's really special and it's just like, I guess like, I'm reminded of my Mum and Dad...almost, because I don't see them very much anymore.

S: Mm,

Z: And like, erm, that's something we shared together, and my Dad was so chuffed that like me and my Mum had matching ones.

S: Aw,

Z: He really liked that, so yeah, I guess it just reminds me of like home.

S: Ok great, I'm just gonna....are they the trousers? [pvc trousers mentioned earlier in the interview] That you mentioned?

Z: Yeah! [laughs]

S: Yeah, they'd be really warm, really nice though...so is this your wardrobe in full? [on the rail at the end of the room, the only storage space in the room]

Z: Yeah, so these are the things I wear the most and then all my other clothes are like, underneath my bed.

S: Ah,

Z: So I've got like big drawers under here [gestures under her bed] that go all the way along.

S: That have everything else in?

Z: Yeah, just because otherwise, I can't get everything out because it's [the room] just too small.

S: Yeah, there's no, storage is hard right?

Z: Yeah, so I made that myself. [the clothes rail stretches the whole width of the room and is attached with wire to the ceiling]

S: Ok [laughs] it's very good.

Z:[laughs] It was meant to be like...one...two. [gestures to either end of the rail to show where the wires would go up to the ceiling]

S: Yeah,

Z: But then, I couldn't get like, the hole in the ceiling. [gestures to the ceiling]

S: Oh,

Z: As you can tell I tried many times. [there are numerous small holes in the ceiling]  
[laughs]

S: [laughs] With like a drill?

Z: Yeah, I called my Dad and was like 'what do I do?' And he was like, just leave it and I'm coming up in a few weeks anyway, and he came up and he was like, why don't you just like, put it back up and then attach this one [points to the wire in the middle] to the one that does stay?

S: Yeah,

Z: So I was like, ok.

S: Perfect, ok great, thanks...I like the skirt as well...I'm such a magpie! [blue PVC short skirt]

Z: Ah, that's like, a wrap skirt [pulls it out to show] but, typical me, it's still got the label on.

S: [laughs]

Z: [walks back down hall towards living room] Oh, and those are my trainers. [new trainers mentioned earlier in interview]

S: Ah, they're like Buffalo Boots...a little bit?

Z: [laughs] yeah.

S: Let me see the trainers.

Z: They're cute aren't they?

S: They're really nice, oh and they've got little reflective bits on...I love reflective at the moment.

Z: Yeah. [laughs]

S: I really want some black reebok classics [looking at the reebok classics in the hall]

Z: Yeah, they're my housemate Jo's.

S: Yeah, they're really good, ah, and you have classic Vans! Everyone has classic Vans now, I can't believe classic Vans are back, back in.

Z: Yeah,

S: I remember wearing them when....see, showing my age, I'm 30, I remember wearing them like, in...around the millennium when everyone was a skater, like, with those really big flared jeans – do you remember those?

Z: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

S: Yeah and a pair of Vans, and then suddenly I saw...people wearing them, like students and people at uni and I was like "Are Vans back, are they cool again?"

Z: [laughs]

S: And one of my other friends at uni like, she tried to go to the Supreme shop, she's...old is she, 41, 42? She doesn't look it you'd never know, um, she came to London and was like I tried to go to the Supreme shop the other day, and, like, I don't understand, there was a queue outside!

Z: [laughs]

S: [laughs] and she was like – what's happened?!

Z: [laughs]

S: Supreme's a thing, this was last year.

Z: [laughs]

S: It was so funny, she was like, I just wanna get some socks!

Z:[laughs]

S: Really upset she couldn't get into the Supreme shop in Soho.

Z: Bless her.

S: Ah yeah, really funny, it's funny how things come back around.

Z: Yeah,

S: Um, so what is the future for your item?

Z: Um, hopefully have it just, forever, and then pass it on to like, my daughter or my son,

S: Mm,

Z: Depending if they like handbags.

S: So you see it as like an heirloom piece?

Z: Yeah.

S: That is always going to be in your possession?

Z: Yeah definitely.

S: Um, and, is there a garment that you wished you still had, that you would treasure if you did have it, so is there something you've thrown away, or is broken or that you've grown out of.

Z: No, because I don't think like...if that broke I'd be really upset.

S: Yeah

Z: Everything else I, I, I find replaceable.

S: Mm

Z: So, um, I'd never be upset by anything else.

S: Yeah, mm.

Z: Most things are replaceable I think.

S: Yeah, so there's nothing that...nothing else that would take that bag's place really?

Z: Yeah, no.

S: Ok great, that's all my questions.

Z: Oh cool.

S: Thanks.

-----ENDS-----



## 10.7 Ali Interview Transcript

S: Ok, so, can just to start with can you tell me a bit about yourself?

A: Erm, my name's Ali, Ali [redacted], er, I'm an Opera Singer, I live in [redacted], er, with my partner [redacted], and yeah, I'm a freelance musician so I have er, what's known as a 'portfolio career' where I do music tuition, pizza delivery [laughs], and er, and sing, as and when possible.

S: And, can you tell me a bit about your family and friends, what you do in your spare time?

A: Er, sure so I'm half Russian and my Dad lives in Moscow, er, I got...er, two sisters that live in South London as well, er, and a brother who lives in York. Er, in my spare time...I mean...just, er...I mean, I really like music so I'll play the piano, I like playing guitar, er, I exercise, erm, yeah....erm, meeting up with friends, drinking, eating food – I love food...I love drink as well so...[smiles].

S: [laughs] Ok and so how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

A: Er, yeah erm, I feel like I'm quite thrifty, that's the number 1 thing for me, er, my relationship with clothes has changed a lot from the past...I was just thinking when you were coming round, I was like wow, 'what do I think about clothes?', erm, so you know, as a teenager I was like 'yeah, these! This is my identity, this is who I am, I'll put on these kind of really'...I had my favourite pair of ripped jeans, and really nice clothes and then as I went into my early twenties it kind of changed a bit and then, I guess 25...I'm now 31, that kind of 25 – 31 thing it just became practical.

S: Mm,

A: Very practical.

S: So how did you dress when you were a teenager?

A: Er...um, I guess I wanted to appear, er, indifferent but in a rebellious way.

S: Right.

A: [Laughs] 'I'm not trying hard' but I was trying hard!

S: [Laughs] And then, then as you grew out of that, so before you were 25...

A: Yeah?

S: How did you dress then?

A: Erm, I think it was just trying to look, erm, a bit like, sharp and edgy, again in quite a casual way, nice jeans, t-shirts with like, cool prints on and stuff, some hats occasionally, yup. Yeah, I got quite into the er, the nightlife in London,

S: Right,

A: So it was quite, er, based in that kind of, you know, trainers, t-shirts, that sort of look.

S: Mm, so how...how do you dress now for practicality, how is it different?

A: Erm, I have these on right now [lifts leg to show baggy harem style trousers] they're very comfy, George actually got these for me in India...

S: I was gonna say they look...they look George inspired,

A: Yeah...these are quite like, George trousers.

S: [Laughs],

A: And this is [gestures to t-shirt] from a charity shop, erm, so yeah I scrub up when I have to, er and one of the items I'm gonna talk about is er, is er, one of my 'I'm trying my best' er, looks, erm and otherwise, er, I'm a cyclist so I cycle to work and other places and then have to kind of mediate er, the, er practicalities of the clothes with where I'm going, so if I'm teaching I'll have like a button up shirt which I can just throw on, um, obviously, you know my stinking t-shirt goes in the bag. Erm, if I'm rehearsing for a show, it'll be into kind of movement, practical, movement clothes. Erm, yep.

S: Me too, like...

A: Yup,

S: I'm only ever in like, stretchy trousers...

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly!

S: Because you can cycle in stretchy trousers.

A: Yeah [laughs] absolutely.

S: And so, do you spend more or less on clothes now than you did, so how has it changed your approach to buying clothes I suppose? From being younger to now?

A: Erm, from being younger to now, er, I'm the youngest of four with a big sister who's 10 years older than me, erm, so hand me downs were the order of the day, luckily, they had some pretty cool clothes, so I did quite well out of that. Erm, and,

er, honestly, I seem to have got by my whole life er, with clothes being sort of given to me, until a certain point where quite...you know, quite recently actually, it's a bit sad, erm, I was like 'wow, I need this, so I have to go out and buy it' erm, and I will now just trawl through charity shops just trying to find the thing I need.

S: Mm,

A: A new pair of jeans, a nice pair of shorts, erm...yeah...mostly, mostly, occasionally I'll splash out on something first hand.

S: Right, so how...yeah, how do describe your approach to shopping, is it based on need, based on what you like, based on...how do you decide, oh I need to go...I'm going shopping or I'm buying clothes or...

A: Um, erm, it's normally preceded with a kind of anxious frustration that I have to do this, I'm like 'Argh! Right, let's go!' and then I'll go, trawl through charity shops or think 'oh no, I just need a blazer for this thing,' so I'll go look at blazers I can't afford, look at blazers that I can afford but I don't like, um, and occasionally I get lucky. Very occasionally. And that's like, an absolute victory.

S: Right, so what it is that you not...is it, more smart things that you'd not go to charity shop for? Like, how do you decide whether to go to a charity shop or...

A: Yeah, I'll always start in the charity shop.

S: Right.

A: Erm, and then ... because we've got so many round Camberwell, erm, er, also I work in West London quite a lot and the charity shops there are great for 2<sup>nd</sup> hand smart things, erm, but it's the sizing, I'm quite a weird size for smart clothes, casual clothes it seems to be fine.

S: Right,

A: But for smart clothes, I've got quite chunky thighs, I think maybe that has something to do with cycling so suit trousers are like, an interminable, like frustration for me. Never ending,

S: No?

A: Never ending.

S: You can't find them?

A: Yeah, I just, I've literally got one pair that fit me.

S: Oh no!

A: Yup, which I'm so proud of!

S: What's different about them, why do they fit? Why don't normal ones fit?

A: [Laughs] I think because now, skinny fit is the norm for men,

S: Right,

A: In clothes and I'm 5'8 with, like a 42 chest and like a 34 to 6 waist so I'm more like boxy [draws rectangle with fingers],

S: Right,

A: Rather than skinny,

S: I see so...

A: So it's just tricky, the high street doesn't really do me a lot of favours,

S: Yeah, because it's too...too slim?

A: Yeah it's just for like, you know, you know, like beanpole legs, like, I don't know, like, how you could get about with legs that thin.

S: Yeah,

A: [Laughs] I just don't know like...[laughs],

S: Like, 'I don't know how your legs work!' [laughs],

A: You know, yeah, it's a loss to me.

S: And so how often do you find yourself purchasing clothing?

A: Er, I'm constantly on the look out and I'll probably have a...have a spend 4 times a year, about that.

S: And how much, how much, will you spend in those 4 times a year do you think?

A: Erm, I think this one [gestures to t-shirt] cost me like £3.50, it was a good one though, I quite like it, erm, and then I got a suit for just over 200 quid. So it really depends.

S: Oh, so was that new or charity shop?

A: That was first hand, first hand yep. So still a bargain for a suit you know.

S: Yeah,

A: Erm, yep.

S: And so, oh, what were the last 3 things you bought?

A: [makes confused face] Ummmm, so long ago I can't remember [pauses] I really can't remember!

S: Oh, ok, so you don't, you don't buy things super often then?

A: No, no, I mean, it's a few times a year.

S: Mm,

A: Um, and I'll eke out clothes until their very last, you know, I've got um, er, the trousers will crotch rip on account of the cycling and then they'll go in the bin and I'll be back on the shorts whether it's like December 31<sup>st</sup> or mid summer [laughs].

S: [Laughs] Until you can go then...

A: Until I then find another suitable pair to purchase.

S: Ok and what would, oh we've talked about price points a little bit, but what would be like, an expensive item, like, how much is price a factor?

A: Erm, if I found a nice pair of jeans I would spend 70 quid on them,

S: Right.

A: Er, I will expect them to last a very, very long time, erm, but I like the idea of spending money on something that's gonna last a while. So I think that's probably why I don't buy things that often because actually I'm quite specific about what I like.

S: Right,

A: Erm, and what suits me as well, I think because I've got like dark hair and blue eyes and I'm quite pale, I'm quite like, kind of 'winter' palette, you know, so I always try and go for that. Erm, but and yeah, often, like, shiny fabric...not into it,

S: No?

A: Not into it at all, apart from one garment, which I'm going to show you, erm, yup, yeah, I'm sort of weirdly specific about what I like.

S: Right,

A: And will trawl everywhere to try and find it and buy very rarely.

S: Ok, so we've talked, we've talked about your style a little bit now, and you've described it as practical, but how else would you describe it? Saying about your specific likes and dislikes?

A: Erm, er... gosh practical, not shiny, erm...I'm loving bamboo socks at the moment,

S: Oh wow,

A: They're good, erm, so I guess maybe, you know, there's like a...yeah...I don't know, yeah how would I describe my style? Erm, smart when I have to be and practical otherwise.

S: Ok great, and do you have like a typical outfit, a typical go to outfit?

A: Currently it's er, my, er oxblood shorts and er a nice jumper, I love a jumper,

S: Yeah,

A: That's something like...a knitted jumper, er kind of er, sweatshirt kind of jumper, just so, kind of cosy to put on, erm, that will suit me down to the ground, always.

S: Ok perfect, so er, how easy or difficult do you find it to get rid of your clothes or give them away or...however you get rid of them?

A: Er, looking around it seems like we're literally inundated with clothes that we can't seem to throw away!

S: [laughs]

A: Erm, er, yeah I think there's definitely a drawer full of stuff that I probably will never wear again, but I'm like 'oh, it's quite nice, maybe one day', so yeah, maybe sort of borderline hoarding would be the answer to that.

S: So how often do you have like a clear out or get rid of erm, get rid of your clothes that you don't really wear anymore?

A: You should really like pan around the room now [laughs],

S: [Laughs],

A: Very, very rarely, very rarely, I think the last one we had was about a year ago and then it was about 5 years before that so.

S: Right, ok.

A: Yup.

S: Cause you guys have lived in this flat quite a long time haven't you?

A: Yeah, I think it's about 9 years now,

S: Yeah,

A: So er,

S: Things accumulate?

A: Accumulate things, a lot. We've got like, boxes of things, yeah.

S: Ok can you show me your treasured garments please?

A: Alright, here we go, so, number 1, is this one [holds up yellow running vest with Mickey Mouse on the front]

S: Aww,

A: Er, it's my Dad's old running shirt from erm, I guess, like the 70s in Moscow, and like 'Hash House Harriers' is like a running group, I don't know if you're familiar with the idea of it?

S: I have, I have heard of it,

A: Ok,

S: Yeah,

A: I, erm, honestly, I'm not sure what the rules are, I think you run, there's like a trail,

S: Yeah,

A: Set out by someone that goes ahead and then everyone drinks beer at the end of it, and er, I think it was just part of the living in Soviet Russia in the 70s the ex pat community would have been a big part of his life, so we had like, growing up, all me and my siblings we had like endless Moscow Hash House Harrier t-shirts,

S: Aww,

A: All with like, Mickey Mouse swearing or like the, the Olympic bear, the Russian Olympic bear, from like, whenever it was in the 80s,

S: Right,

A: Erm, that emblem on it, and, er, yeah I think there was just something about...because Mum was Russian, so I can put it on, and be like here's some of my Russian-ness and some of my English alien in Russia. Erm, also, the, erm, er, it's just quite a funny picture, with Mickey Mouse giving the finger,

S: Yeah, do you know why they chose that?

A: Erm, and the communism star...[laughs] erm, it er, wow, er, Capitalism giving the finger to Communism maybe? Maybe?

S: Ahhh,

A: I think that's possibly one interpretation of it, just something amusingly offensive to run around it, in their communist state maybe as well.

S: So this was worn by all ex-pats...

A: Yes.

S: Rather than native Russians?

A: Er, I think my Mum got involved with it,

S: Right,

A: There are pictures of her wearing er, similar t-shirts, um, but yeah, so er, I don't wear it that often, I think I wore it to a Christmas party this year? Er, and then I hadn't worn it for years, we had to dredge it out of that suitcase down there, I was like 'George, where's my...you know, Mickey Mouse T-shirt' and he's like 'Oh, it's in the suitcase under the bed', erm...where it had been...

S: Good recall though!

A: Oh, he's good at that, he's good at that, erm, and yeah so it's just been er, yeah, lurking away in there, but this was definitely a fave, erm, well, you know, all the way through my life actually, I've had this, er, treasured garment for a long time.

S: Aw,

A: Erm, cause, you know, it's just a silly, and er, quite fun in equal measure.

S: Did you ever live in Moscow?

A: Yeah,



S: Yeah?

A: Sure er,

S: How long for?

A: So I'm the youngest, I've already said, I'm the youngest of four, so we formally moved erm, when I was four, but I went back a lot till I was about 14.

S: Yeah, oh cool.

A: Yeah,

S: So where, apart from your Christmas party last year where else have you worn it, what other occasions have you worn it on?

A: Er, it would have been some rave somewhere, this kind of got a good outing,

S: Yeah,

A: During that time of my life, erm.

S: So it's a going out t-shirt?

A: It's a going out t-shirt, it's a going out, having a good time t-shirt definitely.

S: Yeah,

A: Yeah,

S: So, not, not for running?

A: Not for...oh yeah! Oddly not for running!

S: [laughs]

A: I'd actually feel quite self conscious wearing this round Burgess Park, like 'Alright guys [makes face]' erm, I would definitely erm, not wear that, anywhere where it wasn't obvious that there was some kind of er, er, you know, just a place to go and have fun, basically.

S: That's really interesting, um, how often, how often do you wear it? Or...

A: Er, I'm not sure when the next time's gonna be to be honest, erm, er....you know, maybe, in about 6 months, there might be an occasion where I'll be like 'Yes! Put it on'.

S: So yeah, how do you decide if it's gonna be worn.

A: I dunno...it definitely...I couldn't just walk round wearing it the whole time,

S: No?

A: People would be like 'Ali, you're wearing that weird shirt again, like, it's weird',

S: [Laughs].

A: Er then it's gotta be long enough for people not to be like 'Oh yeah, it's that shirt again,' you know,

S: Ahh,

A: You know?

S: Yeah,

A: So that's, hence it's in the, in the...um, er, suitcase under the bed.

S: Right,

A: Erm, it is a really quite rare special occasion, this one [laughs].

S: Ok, and do you have any particular memories of, of wearing it?

A: Erm, god, getting away with wearing it at school, I remember that was quite funny.

S: [Laughs],

A: Erm, er, then wearing it out to some raves, yeah...there are definitely memories.

S: Mm.

A: And it comes with the story of...

S: Can you tell me about any of them?

A: Beyond that, that's really the end of it, I wore it here and then I wore it there!

S: Right,

A: Erm, but yeah, you know, I can...er, it's a conversation piece I suppose, I can say 'Well you know, I used to live in Moscow,' erm, and then that's the end of the conversation [laughs]!

S: I suppose because people would ask about it?

A: Yeah, like 'What is it, what are you wearing?'

S: Yeah, and so...ah so, you were, you were given it by your Dad? You said?

A: Yeah...I don't know about 'given',

S: 'Given'

A: It was knocking around and I took it.

S: Ah, I see, and how do you feel when you're wearing it?

A: Erm, normally, er, yes, as I said, it's a piece that I'll wear if I'm going out to have a good time so I will be uplifted and er, in a good mood,

S: Yeah,

A: Yeah,

S: And how does it feel physically to wear, what's the fabric like?

A: Have a feel [hands the garment over] it is...um, I wouldn't go near an open flame,

S: [laughs] [feels fabric] Ahhh,

A: Mmhm,

S: Oooh

A: Oof, that is...I don't even know if there's going to be a label it's so, umm...oh hold on...hello, hello...

S: That's a funny fabric, I was expecting to be like...

A: Oh it's...I have...I have never seen this 50% polyester, 50% cotton,

S: Ahhh,

A: Wow, so it has actually got some cotton in it,

S: It feels quite hard doesn't it?

A: Yeah,

S: It's quite...like, I thought would be...it looks silkier than it feels...

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah,

S: On the inside,

A: Yeah,

S: And so do you think this garment fits your personal style in general or stands outside from it?

A: Er it stands outside, erm, I'd normally go for er, kind of er, subtle hues, er greys, blues, blacks, um, and this obviously...um, I don't even know what colour it is, kind of oran...yellow? Orange? Yellow? What are we going for? Yellow. It's yellow...orange. I don't know.

S: Yeah it's kind of...like a, dark yellow?

A: Yeah,

S: Almost like a sunshine yellow?

A: Yeah exactly, sunflower at sunset that sort of thing [laughs],

S: Mmm, and what's your reason for keeping it?

A: Er, it's a bit of a family heirloom so it's not mine to throw away.

S: Ah, I see.

A: I wouldn't, I mean, come on, you couldn't put this in the bin could you?!

S: No [laughs],

A: And if I put it in one of the charity shops here and saw someone else wearing it, I'd be like 'It's mine!' [laughs].

S: Yeah, give it back! [laughs].

A: You know yeah...er, yeah, you know...one day, I guess my nephew will be probably be wearing it....so.

S: Mm,

A: Yup, it will be passed on.

S: Erm, I suppose that ties into your reason for keeping it? Cause I've got, yeah...

A: Yeah,

S: Oh no, I've asked that...So when did it become thought of as treasured or special?

A: Er, I think from the moment I...it's always been part of the family story,

S: Right,

A: Dad lives in Moscow, goes running, er, is an ex-pat there, we've lived there and went to like, different shops and to er, Russian people, went to places with names like 'The Diplomatic Beach', you know [laughs] good times on The Diplomatic Beach. Um, yeah er, so it's all part of that story of er, being slightly other in a different country. And part of my identity as that's my family story, so it kind of fits in with that and has always been treasured I guess.

S: Yeah,

A: On account of that.

S: And, oh we've covered that, the future for this item, erm, yeah, what's the future for the item?

A: Er, at some point I, I don't know if one of my siblings is gonna wear it, er but maybe a nephew or two might, when they're old enough, I think now it would be inappropriate.

S: Yeah, oh, how old are they? [laughs]

A: [laughs] Er, nearly six and,

S: [laughs] oh so that would be...

A: And, um, pending.

S: Oh! Ok,

A: Yeah, [laughs]

S: Oh that would be so funny sending them to Primary School in it,

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, off you go like [puts his middle finger up] [laughs].

S: [laughs] Ok, and is there, do you have...is there a garment that you wished you still had that would be a treasured garment if you still had it?

A: Ahhhh, yeah don't even go there, so many! So many, um, like a whole, there was a whole, there's a whole load of these Moscow Hash House Harrier t-shirts,

S: Yeah,

A: Which either got ripped to shreds, or...just because they were so old, or, you know, I don't know where they go, where do my nice t-shirts go? I had so many really nice ones that um, yeah, are just no more they just kind of, I don't know, I wear them somewhere, someone borrows it, it's just gone, like, countless, countless.

S: Yeah,

A: Items that I was like, 'That was cool' and it's not there anymore.

S: Ok perfect, so, do you, you have another item to show me?

A: Yeah, sure, er, so this is my not shiny, erm, er, appropriately sized thigh...er, suit.

S: Yup,

A: That I got, not from Hawkes and Curtis, I got it from T.M Lewin, there we are [opens jacket to reveal lining],

S: Oh yeah,

A: Erm, and it says 'Slim fit',

S: It says 'Slim fit',

A: But it fits, so happy days...I had to get the thighs taken out [smiles].

S: [Laughs],

A: Erm, I got the, I got the blazer in one shop um, because I was kicking up a fuss, I was like 'You know, what's going on here, these suits can't fit anyone!' He was like 'Ok, wait, we've got this one, it's on offer' um because it is...it's really, you can feel it, it's erm...it's wool and cashmere I think.

S: Ooooo,

A: So, you know, not a, not a glimmer of polyester in suit...in sight!

S: It is nice,

A: Erm, yeah, er yeah, there we are, 95% wool, 5% cashmere, nice.

S: Lovely.

A: Erm, I bought it initially for a friend's wedding in South Africa so it was pretty warm for a summer wedding in South Africa.

S: Yeah, in your woolen cashmere suit? [laughs]

A: Yeah, exactly in my woolen! But the, er, the brief was navy blue,

S: Right,

A: So I was like, alright, got it, erm, and yeah, I really...I like the material, erm, it was, it came at a really good price, I spent just over 200 quid on it and it was marked down from like £400 or something so, that was my thriftiness.

S: Yeah,

A: I was like, 'Yes, this means it's a good deal, because it's cheaper I have to have it,' I will always um, get the you know, if it's like a 3 for 2 offer, great yeah, 3 of them, I don't need 3! And then you have 1 rotten a week later. Erm, so I always fall for that, and I fell for it this time, but you know, I really like, it fits well, the trousers, um, incredibly, fit me, you know.

S: Mmm,

A: That's the real trauma with formalwear, and unless, you know, you sink like, £1000 on a suit,

S: Yeah,

A: It's a tricky one, because the whole point in wearing a suit is to look smart.

S: Yeah,

A: That's the single purpose of it, erm, so buying a slightly ill fitting suit defeats the purpose entirely, so you may as well do like a kind of smart trousers, shirt, blazer combo,

S: Yeah,

A: Which is a more affordable way of doing it, erm, to kind of still fit into that smart bracket of 'I'm here to do this thing' which is um, not just cycling or sitting around at home, it's the other one [laughs].

S: That's it, and suits, like you said, they're designed to be fitted,

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

S: They're designed to be very well fitted, to give you that like, classic menswear shape,

A: Well it's to make you look, like 'Yeah, this guy, he's serious!'

S: Yeah,

A: 'Alright here he is'...'oh, the sleeves are a bit long and it looks like you've borrowed it off your Dad, oh...' 'Take me seriously!'

S:[Laughs],

A: You know, that's the aim of it.

S: There's few things more tragic than ill fitting suits [laughs],

A: Yeah, yeah, exactly, exactly, yep, yeah and for me it's always like, um, yep, the kind of a, bunching around the crotch trousers and you know, it's such a bad look!

S: [Laughs],

A: And er, yeah, so I'm absolutely delighted with this one er, and I wear it to auditions and er, for like lunchtime concerts and stuff like that erm, obviously that wedding,

S: Yeah,

A: Erm, yeah.

S: So, is it...is the suit more of...is it...is it your only suit? Is it the only one you have?

A: Erm...no, erm, I bought...I've got a black tie,

S: Yep,

A: Um, erm, you know like DJ [Dinner Jacket] and trousers,

S: Mmhm,

A: Erm, for concerts, and I...er, was a er...sort of signed up to like a funeral singing agency recently and they were like, 'It's gotta be a black suit'

S: Right,

A: And I was like [looks at blue suit he's holding and mock screams],

S: Oh...oh no! [laughs]



A: Erm and I've got er...from, from when I was, I think 21 or 22, I've got a er...I've still got it, in there [gestures to wardrobe out of shot], back to the not being able to throw anything away, um...er, yes and I think I was a waist 32 then, that's not the case anymore [shakes head],

S: Ah,

A: Even...I remember buying it, on the cheap, um, and er, some guy, the shop owner was like 'It's the perfect suit for you' and I was like 'Ooo, it's a bit tight,' erm, so then, on the day I bought it I was like [mimes struggling to button up trousers] 'Oh yeah, just about, just about' er, anyway, the point being, that's very, very dark blue and when you put it next to someone in a black suit you're like 'It's blue' so I couldn't wear that, even like squeezing myself in to it, which I wouldn't be able to do now, that would be a proper like, safety pin job. Erm, so I erm, yeah, went and bought a polyester black suit, much to my shame.

S: Ah,

A: But er, it sort of looks alright, the trousers don't fit [laughs],

S: Oh, that's a shame,

A: But it'll be fine, I can just squeeze into it, for a funeral.

S: Yeah,

A: Stand behind someone, sing, and then get outta there!

S: Right,

A: It's fine, you know, but yeah, um, yeah. So yes, I have got a few suits.

S: So how do you feel when you're wearing this suit, compared to when you're wearing your Moscow suit...Moscow suit, Moscow shirt!

A: Oh, er, I mean they're entirely different occasions, er, this is formal, 'I'm here to do a thing, I'm a serious guy, and this is going to be good'

S: Yeah,

A: That is [points to Mickey Mouse Moscow shirt] erm, we're just here to have a good time, let's not take anything too seriously,

S: Yeah,

A: So we've got kind of serious, not serious, serious [gestures to suit],

S: And, so, is that one more to do with your work or is it to do with...

A: Yeah, well work, um, you know er, if there's a formal wedding...

S: Yeah,

A: It's just a, a formal thing you know, I guess a lot of my work is quite formal,

S: Yeah,

A: Um, yeah.

S: So when did that one become thought of as treasured? Or is it treasured um, yeah and your reason for keeping it?

A: It's relatively new, I bought it this year, er, and it was treasured the moment that I tried on the newly fitted trousers, and they didn't bunch up round my groin, that was like, great, this is... this is good, I can walk in them...my thighs, there's like, still a bit of room, there's a bit of give,

S: Yeah,

A: Erm, happy days, so that was, that was the moment they became treasured, and I was like, 'this suit's a keeper'.

S: Right,

A: It's gonna last me a while.

S: So yeah, how long do you expect to keep that suit?

A: Oh! I dunno, I dunno, 10 years? This is good, this a long haul.

S: And do you think this fits with your personal style?

A: Erm, yeah sure, I mean um, er, you know, suits are...I did a kind of t-shirt – suit combo er, for a kind of semi-formal gig. It was like an open day with an Opera company that I work for a lot and erm, the idea was that as people walked past there were people singing arias on the steps of the venue,

S: Ah, lovely,

A: And erm, and then they can come in with their families and there are lots of like, activities for kids to do,

S: Yeah,

A: So it's like a kind of welcoming thing, so I did kind of like a t-shirt – suit combo for that, or...you could do like an open shirt, I'd do that for like an audition,

S: Yeah,

A: So it's like I've made a bit of an effort, but it's not as stifling as like I'm wearing a tie, which I would do very rarely, um, that would kind of be wedding or funeral, a tie.

S: Ok, and oh so, how do you feel when you're wearing this...oh have we talked about how you feel, yes, we have, erm, ok great, do you have any other garments to show me?

A: I think really it's just this erm, this one, it's a self tying bow tie [not pre tied].

S: Oh, cool,

A: I was pretty chuffed when I figured out how to tie my own bow tie.

S: Yeah,

A: And, er, I don't know why, because people make a big deal about it, there's something about a clip on that is just, a bit of a cheat,

S: Yeah,

A: And er, everyone wears it, and I just don't know, I don't why, maybe it's just my kind of skewed idea of masculinity and a childhood of watching Schwarzenegger movies, that I'm like 'I've gotta prove that I'm like, the real deal! This is real! [shakes hand with bow tie in]'

S: [Laughs],

A: You know, it's kind of weird in that sense, but er, you know, I feel a sense of when I'm doing it up [mimes tying a bow tie] I'm like 'Ah, there were are, now I'm ready.' And I can go...it's normally for, I wear it for singing,

S: Right,

A: Erm, at more...at really formal occasions,

S: Yeah,

A: So it kind of, gets me into the headspace of er, this is um, a...kind of, very formal, legit, er, performance and kind of gets me ready for that as well so,

S: Yeah,

A: You know, it's about the preparation, erm, you know being...um, yeah, yeah.

S: So it's about...is it a difference between actually tying and just clipping it on?

A: Yeah,

S: You think there's a difference?

A: There is an actual difference in my mind to doing that,

S: Oh really?

A: If put on a clip on, er, I think, oh, you know, it's...it's like cutting corners, you know you're like click [mimes clipping on a tie] ok, lets go, right sing something, 'Well, I can't you know, have I really prepared for this?'

S: Yeah,

A: Erm, whereas this is like 'Yes, I've got the, I've got the good stuff, this is gonna be great.'

S: Yeah, when did you get that then?

A: Er, a couple of years ago, erm, I er...so George got like a load of silk bow ties which actually came with instructions of how to do them, so I was like [mimes tying a bow tie] great, and that's when I learned how to do it. Erm, so I immediately got rid of my clip on ones and it was for a friend's Mum's event somewhere in the City, um, and it was a black tie event, and er, I just picked this up on my way there. And the guy in the shop was like 'Do you want the real one or the fake one?' and I was like 'I'm going to get the real one' and he was like 'Are you sure?' and I was like 'Yeah, the silk, self tying, bow tie', I paid for it, not a lot, I think it was about 16 quid or something, erm, but er, yeah, it just kind of feels like thorough, preparation, very formal, this is it, it's happening, it's the real deal.

S: Great, so when did that become thought of as treasured?

A: Erm, yeah I dunno actually, erm, I think because it's...erm, whenever...I've put it on loads now, and it's just part of er, my lifestyle as a performer,

S: I see,

A: That um, you know er, you...it's just part of the...er, I guess uniform that I get into that means...gets me into the headspace for doing a certain type of performance.

S: Right,

A: Um, you know, it's not a... it's not a you know...like tonight, I'll be singing in a restaurant at people while they eat their dinner,

S: I see,

A: I'm not gonna be wearing the bow tie for that!

S: You don't need to do the prep? [laughs]

A: Yeah exactly! That's not going to happen, um, whereas this will be for like a more serious concert or, I sing at like a ballroom, at like a black tie dance, where everyone's wearing black tie,

S: Yeah,

A: So you're kind of in that uniform, you're in that headspace, it's like, really formal, erm, and I guess it became treasured through being part of my preparation for those events, erm and therefore part of, um, er, this kind of life long drive I've got to be a singer you know?

S: Mmm,

A: It's all interconnected. That thing of 'Hi, my name's Ali, I'm an Opera Singer' you know,

S: Ok, fab, can you show me where all of these are stored really quickly?

A: Yep, er sure, um...

S: I'll just stop this. [stops recording to begin another video] Awesome, right,

A: Ok, are we doing this?

S: Yeah, where...where does everything live?

A: Ok, this is an old cupboard [talking about wardrobe] [laughs] erm, [opens wardrobe] er, this suit lives in the original suit carrier,

S: Oh,

A: Because I really want it to stay nice and clean for as long as possible, erm, and undamaged from quickly pulling things in and out of the wardrobe as you can see [gestures to another jacket in the wardrobe] this has been caught in the door, you know, that stuff happens...let me just zip it up,

S: So it has a special place in the wardrobe?

A: It's got a, it's got a special place and there it is [puts suit in wardrobe next to another suit bag] stored nicely, erm, I mean not far away from this number which I just have to show you [pulls out a black jacket with lots of gold brocade on it]

S: Lovely! Is that one yours?

A: Yeah, it's not treasured just yet, it was a gift actually, oddly enough, erm, good, so that's that one, next door [the item next to where he put the suit] we have the erm, Lipman and Sons formalwear, that's got the DJ in it which erm...oh yeah the zip broke! [looks at zip on suit cover] ah, I forgot about that, so annoying!

S: So it's trapped in there?

A: Yeah it's trapped! [laughs] and in the pocket [front pocket of suit bag] of that goes the bow tie.

S: Ahhhh,

A: Erm, and it's got things...like, you know, I've got some music in here from the gig that I was singing it at, so that's like...that's the prep...prep pocket.

S: Yeah,

A: It's got the bow tie, bit of music, probably some cufflinks, erm, what else have we got in here? We've got a metronome, you know,

S: Of course,

A: It means I'm ready, ready for the gig, ready for the concert. [puts suit bag back in wardrobe] So those are the two bits of formalwear, the bow tie and the suit, back into the mahogany cupboard, and then yeah, I mean, so this wasn't [picks up Moscow Hash House Harriers vest] er, kept in the suitcase under the bed which you can probably see just there by the umbrella next to all the crap on the floor, should have probably hovered. This was kept in the t-shirt drawer, right at the bottom [puts item in the drawer at the bottom] where it will probably stay, for another 6 months to a year, but I'll know where it is,

S: Yeah, and so how do you care for the items?

A: Er, well for the suit obviously, I spent the money on it, and I want it to have a long...I want the longevity of it's use, erm, so yeah, that's in the original suit carrier, in the mahogany cupboard, it's not just going to be thrown on the floor like a lot of items of clothing are, um, the 'floordrobe' is not suitable for that one. Um, the bow tie, yup, kept in that pocket in the suit carrier, um, and that seems to keep it safe,

S: Yeah,

A: And then the t-shirt yeah, as I kind of said it was in the long term not wearing this now,

S: Yeah,

A: Um, suitcase er, but it seems to have emigrated to the drawer, but it's definitely at the bottom of the drawer so,

S: When did it move from the suitcase to the drawer? Was that...

A: Um, it was for the Christmas party...

S: The Christmas party,

A: That I wore it for,

S: Yeah, so you had to dig it out?

A: Yeah,

S: And you never...you didn't put it back in there?

A: No, it actually is very difficult to get that suitcase out from under the bed,

S: Right,

A: So it's really like long term, we're not wearing these, for a while,

S: Yeah,

A: It's got loads of random stuff in there, but I can't...I can't even remember what's in there,

S: I have, I have a suitcase which is just...you've just reminded me I'm like...

A: [Laughs],

S: I can think of two things that are maybe in there but...

A: Yeah, yeah [laughs],

S: I'm gonna ignore it and hope it...just don't think about it!

A: Yeah, [laughs],

S: Ok and do you have anything else...oh which, which is your favourite or most treasured out of the garments you showed me?

A: Out of those three? It's probably the, the vest,

S: Yeah,

A: You know, it's got...it's so much a part of er, it's er, kind of emblematic of like my family and my life, and it's got kind of it's like an icon of a part of my identity I suppose with the whole kind of Russian thing.

S: Mm, yeah, and is there anything else you'd like to add about clothes or fashion or anything we've discussed?

A: Erm, I don't think so, I think we've been quite thorough about my kind of view of clothing.

S: Yeah,

A: And, a few, a handful of items that have you know, I can say something about them so that's it really.

S: Ok perfect, thank you.

A: Alright, thanks very much.

-----ENDS-----



## 10.8 Tom Interview Transcript

S: Can you confirm you've read and signed the participant information sheet?

T: Yes I can indeed.

S: And can you tell me a bit about yourself?

T: Er, my name's Tom [redacted] I'm, er, 44 years old, I identify as white British, male and straight.

S: Can you tell me a bit about yourself as you, rather than...

T: Ok, like what?

S: Like...

T: What I do for a living?

S: Yeah just...tell me about you.

T: I live in London, erm, I work as an academic, er, I teach social work at the University of London, I have done so for the last 10 years, I am married, er, I am originally from Norwich, I have lived in many places around the UK, erm, I am in to various fitness activities including weightlifting and um, gymnastics.

S: Can you tell me about your family?

T: Er, well my family unit consists of myself and my wife, erm, but I have a, one sibling, a younger sister and, er, two parents, a father and a mother.

S: Ok, and how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

T: Erm, [pauses] er...I suppose I have a passing interest in...um...style? I suppose, and...er, how style relates to culture, erm, particularly some of the cult... I suppose the cultures that were around in my youth for example, football casuals and rave and that sort of thing, erm, would be the basis of my interest in, in fashion.

S: And how do you feel about clothes?

T: They're, they, they're useful for not being naked [laughs], erm, I don't understand the question.

S: Well, what do you think about clothes?

T: I think they're a necessity. Erm.

S: Ok, so how would you describe your style?

T: Er, lazy [laughs] I mean, I tend to wear... pre... what are you making faces at me for? I tend to wear, pretty much the same thing every day which is either, which is usually, Adidas trainers, er, blue jeans, and some sort of top, or, I'm in gym kit, which is shorts, trainers...er sports shoes and t-shirt. That tends to be essentially what I wear most days.

S: Ok, and how often do you purchase clothing?

T: Erm, er, I don't know, um, every couple of months maybe?

S: Where from?

T: Erm, usually online or TK Maxx.

S: Which shops online?

T: Er, oh, erm, Brand Ally, er, erm...[pauses] oh, what's it called? Can't remember the name of it [pauses] Daylight Curfew!

S: What kind of things do you buy from Daylight Curfew?

T: Er, I bought a bomber jacket and I've bought something else from there haven't I? But I can't think what it is. But a couple of items.

S: A hoody?

T: Oh yeah, a hoody, that's right.

S: And, why did you buy those things?

T: Cause, erm [pauses] they seemed...both in vogue and within my kind of...[pauses] style...erm [pauses] palate.

S: Can you describe the items you bought?

T: Er...yeah? One's a... it's a, er, bomber jacket, erm, a green bomber jacket that's covered in lots of patches, erm, that all relate to a... erm, a US based record label and the other is a hoodie that has a...inside the... it's a black hoodie, inside the hood it's got a...a picture of erm... a astronaut, no, forget that, it's meant to be a cosmonaut [astronauts are American, cosmonauts are Russian] , a cosmonaut floating in space inside, inside the hood, and it's also got embroidering on, on the right hand side to say the numbering because it's a limited edition of 100, so it's number...I can't remember what number it is, but is says number 32 out of 100 or something.

S: And so how do those things fit into your style as you've already described it?

T: Erm, well like I said I tend to wear...well, perhaps I didn't say, but yeah hoodies are, are yeah, I wear, I wear quite a lot of hoodies, erm, I suppose I don't own any other bomber jackets but it kind of fitted with the time I bought it about 3 years ago? And it felt like something that was, I could wear, erm...that was, as I say, in vogue at the time, but still fitted, yeah, still fitted with what I would feel comfortable wearing.

S: You mentioned that you either wore gym kit or just jeans and a top and this feels like it's slightly different to those things?

T: Yeah, I suppose they are, erm, but not in a...[pauses], but I couldn't explain why or how.

S: Ok, so how about clothes you've bought before, so other limited edition or designer pieces or things like that?

T: Yeah?

S: So, I know...[laughs],

T: Yeah, exactly, so I don't, I don't know what you're referring to specifically.

S: So, for example... I know that you do wear... I know that your style is just jeans and t-shirts a lot but you've also got quite a few mid- range designer pieces that have been bought from Bicester Village, that you like buying limited edition pieces, that...

T: Mmm.

S: Those kinds of things.

T: I think the confusion is here, I wasn't expecting all these questions about generally my views on style, I was expecting much more about this treasured garment, I'm a bit kind of, thrown by this but I'll carry on now. So yeah, I have bought some, like you said, some designer pieces over the years from, yeah from Bicester Village, erm, and [pauses] also Brand Alley as well, I've got a orange Stone Island, er sweater that's got a large kind of embossed Stone Island logo on the front, I suppose you would describe that as a designer piece? And, erm, what else? Oh, I've got a Paul Smith, double breasted wool jacket that's got very fancy lining, erm, and is black...[pauses] have I got some other Paul Smith pieces? I must have, I can't think of them off the top of my head.

S: You've got a scarf.

T: Yeah, I've got a Paul Smith scarf in the sort of house stripe.

S: You've got an Aquascutum trench.

T: [shakes head] Burberry trench.

S: Is it?

T: Mmm, [nods head] yeah I've got a Burberry trench.

S: I'm pretty sure it's Aquascutum.

T: It was Burberry last time I checked [laughs],

S: Alright,

T: When I bought it, it was Burberry [laughs]!

S: Is that the one with the double lining?

T: That's Hugo Boss.

S: Ooooh, that's the one I'm thinking of.

T: [laughs]

S: You've got a couple of Burberry jumpers [pauses]. So, what leads you to make those purchases?

T: Erm...

S: Cause they're not basic things.

T: No, they're statement pieces aren't they?

S: Mmm.

T: No, the Hugo Boss, er, jacket is a statement piece, it was massively reduced, it was just expensive rather than outrageously expensive, erm, and yeah...it's just, well it was...it's a bit worn these days, it's 10 years old, erm, but it's a really...you know, great looking winter coat. Er, same with this Paul Smith jacket, er, that's survived slightly better actually, erm, but it's a great cut, it's obviously a really well made piece of winter clothing, erm, it looks er, it looks smart yet it looks...erm, yeah, it's warm, and it's...it's, erm...clearly a...er...what's the word I used before, I used before? Erm, a statement piece, yeah.

S: So what's your approach to buying those kind of, those kind of things? Like how do you choose them?

T: Erm, actually with...[pauses] all those above mentioned items [pauses] I have made the decision about whether to purchase the item in collaboration with either my wife or my sister, so there's been some female input [smiles] into the purchase of all those items [laughs].

S: And why do you think that is?

T: Erm, [pauses] deference to the women in my life on er, issues of style and fashion?

S: Would you ask them about buying some new jeans or a new t-shirt?

T: Not necessarily, no.

S: So what's the difference?

T: Er, I suppose it's about, the confidence about buying a statement piece whereas I know what I'm looking for in a pair of jeans, I know what...what would [pauses] what I like, what would fit, whereas a statement piece I guess it's slightly more controversial, slightly more, erm [pauses] erm, what's the word I'm looking for? Erm, obviously it's meant to make a statement, therefore it's meant to be seen rather than jeans and trainers are almost...[pauses] almost...well as er, erm...oh who's the guy who writes about Blue Jeans? Danny? Danny Miller isn't it? The sort of...they're almost like the, the, the, the...in some ways, non clothes, they kind of blend into the background of, of clothing. Whereas a statement piece obviously does the exact opposite [nods].

S: And so, er, how expensive are your clothes normally?

T: Erm...

S: How much do you usually spend on clothes?

T: Er, I've no idea actually, erm ... [pauses]

S: Well like, for example, you could tell me how much you spend on maybe items of gym wear vs. items you described like your jeans and t-shirts vs. items that are your like, more like your statement pieces?

T: Mmmm.

S: So you could just tell me about the price points for each of those?

T: Ok, so statement pieces, depending on what it is, between, I dunno £100 and £500? Erm, gymwear, not a lot, erm, 10, 20, 30 pounds, it's just going to get smelly and sweaty and, fairly quickly anyway. Erm [pauses] erm jeans, jeans and trainers...I

mean tra...jeans, a decent pair of jeans seem to be around about a £100 a pair mark these days aren't they?

S: What brand of jeans do you buy?

T: Erm, mainly Diesel. Erm, yeah most of my jeans a Diesel.

S: And why is that?

T: Just er, [pauses] I suppose they were the kind of ...erm [pauses] when I was in my...20s I suppose, Diesel were the, *the* kind of mid range...mid range brand, er, that represented, I don't know, social position, class, that sort of thing, you know what I mean? It was, erm, they weren't [pauses] you know, necessarily a high end brand and they weren't sort of, you know, the, a budget brand, they were somewhere in between and that was kind of, I suppose...and, and also, you know so they were seen as the kind of...yeah, that kind of...fulfilling some kind of, mid-way point between luxury clothing and budget clothing I guess.

S: And how often do you go shopping?

T: Erm, for clothes?

S: Yeah.

T: Erm, [pauses] rarely do I deliberately go out looking for clothes, but there is a TK Maxx very close to my office that I probably pop into and have a look to see what they've got about once a week.

S: What's your attitude to shopping?

T: Er, get in and out as quick as possible [pauses] I don't really like to spend too muc...well it depends actually, no, I mean, it depends on what I'm shopping for, and where you're shopping doesn't it? Erm [pauses]...

S: Can you give some examples?

T: Mmmm, [pauses] well I suppose, I was thinking of the last time I went to Oxford Street which was because, actually with my sister and she wanted to go to Oxford Street, and...spent some time looking round the shops but that was mainly because it was a really hot day, and the shops had good air conditioning more that anything else.

S: Well what's your attitude to buying clothes then? How do you, how do you decide to buy your clothes?

T: Erm...

S: What's it based on?

T: Erm, need, you know, do I need pants? So I'll buy some pants.

S: How about other things?

T: Erm, so yeah with basics like pants, socks, jeans, that sort of thing it's basically, erm, need, other stuff, erm, er, if I see something I like...er...I quite often, with things like trainers, erm, if Adidas have got a sale on,

S: Mmm,

T: I'll often go flicking through their website and see if there's anything I like in the sale based on the fact I got an email saying 'we've got 30% off this week' or whatever. [Nods] So yeah, that will quite often influence whether I'll bother to...yeah, whether I'll bother to go on the Adidas website and look at their trainers will be influenced quite significantly by whether I get a 30% off discount code.

S: Mhm, and other things, like statement pieces, what prompts you to buy those?

T: Again, er, well I have to see them to start with.

S: Yeah, so how would you see them?

T: With both the Daylight Curfew pieces because they emailed me saying 'look at this, isn't this amazing you'd love it'.

S: So why are you on the Daylight Curfew email list to start with?

T: Erm, because they do merch for, merchandising for a couple of bands that I really like.

S: What are the bands?

T: Er, Run the Jewels.

S: What kind of band are they?

T: They're a hip hop band.

S: Why do you like them?

T: [laughs] Because they're really good, erm because they er, um, are a couple of rappers who have been around for a while, they've been in previous other bands: 'Company Flow' and so on who I've followed for many years, and I think they're very talented rappers, and they formed this new band, well new band...a few years ago now, probably about 4 years ago, called Run The Jewels and they realized that the

business model for making money out of music i.e selling music wasn't really working and actually way the way to make money out...from their band was to make it, to make their band a brand, and, erm, market their brand which has a particular logo and, erm, you know, they've been very clever in how they've been able to monetize their brand in order to make money out of their music. Er, as an alternative to actually selling music, because obviously, no one buys music anymore they just download it for free.

S: And so, erm, how many pairs of trainers do you think you have?

T: Am I allowed to look down there [towards a pile of trainers] while I...[laughs]

S: Would you say you have a lot of trainers, and what kind of trainers do you buy?

T: Yeah, I've got quite a lot [pauses]....let me see, there's 2 pairs in my office [looks down at trainers]...including gym shoes in this as well?

S: I mean, you can talk about gym shoes vs other trainers if you want.

T: [looks at shoes] Between 20 and 30 pairs of trainers.

S: Does that include gym shoes?

T: Yes...[laughs] 4 pairs, 5 pairs, 6 pairs of gym shoes, so 2 pairs of weightlifting shoes, they're not really 'trainers' are they? 4 pairs of gym shoes...no, 5, 6 pairs of gym shoes, [pauses] erm, yeah, and probably about 20 pairs of casual trainers, mostly Adidas.

S: And are they all the same? What do they look like?

T: Er, they're all, they'll all be Adidas Originals, so the kind of the [pauses] I suppose the kind of, the Adidas kind of retro line I suppose isn't it? Erm, I'm just going to have some water [drinks water]. A lot of them are Adidas Superstars which have the famous 'shell toe' erm, er...have I got any Gazelles at the moment? I don't think I have. Erm...

S: I can see a pair? Or are they not Gazelles?

T: They're not Gazelles [picks up shoe] Sambas.

S: Are the green ones Sambas as well?

T: Londons.

S: Ah.

T:[laughs],



S: [laughs]. They look really similar to Gazelles!

T: They do, don't they? But yeah, you get the idea...I'll show them to the camera actually [holds up a one red and yellow Samba and one green London trainer] they're all kind of fairly similar style of Adidas Original trainers in different colours. Erm, there's also some shell toes, Superstars, [holds up a black Adidas Superstar] those are actually reflective if you...or luminesant if you turn a bright light on them and stuff, and these [holds up a grey Adidas Superstar] that are made out of...erm, perma...prima loft, which is an insulation material. So yeah, lots of those, er, and then I've also got in terms of gym shoes I've got four pairs of Reebok Nanos [Holds up a Reebok Nano] this is one pair here, or one of...one half of one pair. Erm, that are very, very comfortable shoes for doing all kinds of fitness activities in from running to climbing to jumping to weightlifting to...well anything really, they're very durable, solid and I've got four pairs of them.

S: So why so many pairs of trainers?

T: Erm, [pauses] I like Adidas Originals trainers. [Pauses] Erm I think...I think it relates...so it relates to er, sub-cultural style in the 90s, erm, particularly rave culture and casual culture, and I suppose my interest in that [takes a sip of water] and participation in that at the time. And very much collecting, collecting Adidas trainers was kind of part of that culture.

S: Ok, so how easy or difficult do you find it to throw clothes away?

T: Erm, I don't, erm, I don't think I find it difficult, I just don't do it very often.

S: Why, why don't you do it very often?

T: Erm, [pauses] erm, [pauses] because it's not, it's not on priority list to go through pruning my wardrobe...but yeah I wouldn't have, you know, I were to...if you were to sort of say to me today can you go through your wardrobe and get rid of everything that you haven't worn in the last 3 years and has no...you're unlikely to wear in the next 3 years and has no significant value to you I could probably find half a dozen pieces quite easily and I'd be quite happy to take them to the charity shop.

S: Well what about those pieces that have a value to you, like, how do you decide how, how would you...if you were going through your wardrobe, deciding what to throw away how would you do that?

T: I'll base it on the fact that I hadn't worn it for ages, erm, I'm unlikely to wear it, there's stuff that's...I bought years ago on a whim and maybe worn once or twice and I don't even know why it's there, actually, I can think of several, for example, I, I never wear shirts, I've got several shirts in my wardrobe, that I never wear, why are they in my wardrobe? I don't need them [shakes head]. They'd be far better off in the charity shop at least someone, someone would wear it then.

S: Ok so, um, can you show me your treasured garment?

T: I can, it's right here [picks up garment]. It's a T-Shirt, it's very faded, it was red once, but it's faded into a kind of pink colour, um, it's very large, it's quite big, it doesn't fit...it kind of dwarves me a bit, um, as you can probably see it says 'Tintin and New York' on the front with Tintin and Snowy, er, looking at the Manhattan skyline from the back of a boat.

S: Ok, and can you tell me about the garment?

T: Er, it's [sighs] what would you like to know about it? I think, cause when you asked me to find a treasured garment, asked for a treasured garment, I picked this one for 3 reasons, er, 1, how I acquired it, 2...is one of the reasons, 2 is when I acquired it and what that represented to me and [tapping a third finger] what this t-shirt has subsequently gone on to sort of mean or represent, so there's 3 kind of...3 different ways that this T-shirt is, is, has value to me, that are not of any monetary value or you know, or anything like that.

S: Ok great so, start with the first one, tell me about that reason, start at the second one, tell me about that reason...

T: The second one?

S: No, start at the first one, tell me about that, then the second one, then the third one.

T: Ok, so, it was given to me by a guy called John, and, er, John was a er, was the manager of a erm, a respite home for disabled people. And this was John's t-shirt, he used to wear this and I commented once that I really liked his t-shirt and he said 'Do you like it?' and I said 'Yeah I really like it' and he said "You can have it" and I said "Are you sure?" and he said "Yeah, of course", and he gave me his t-shirt. And, this, so this kind of moves on to the...I suppose, slightly onto the second point really in my life, that when I er, got, when...when I met John and he gave me this t-shirt, was...I was kind of a...at a bit of junction in my life in terms of moving...of closing of one chapter and opening of another and, and the place where... and the chapter that was just closing, the idea of people gifting through altruism or just a gift that there was no expectation of reciprocity was quite alien to me, so this was really quite...so this felt kind of quite bizarre at the time, that someone's just going to give me their t-shirt. So the context of that was that John was running this er, erm, respite home for disabled people which is effectively a erm, a holiday centre, somewhat like, erm, erm, Butlins or Pontins or that type of holiday home, but it was specifically designed for profoundly disabled people, and on the surface, the...the sort of role of this centre was to enable people's carers to have a break. It was respite for carers, so it was for profoundly disabled people so it would enable their parents or their partners or their loved ones a week or two weeks where they didn't have to spend pretty much every hour of their working ... every hour... well every hour of their day caring

for their... for their...for their loved one. Erm, and I worked at this centre, this was [pauses] I'm going to say '96, and actually I notice this t-shirt is dated '93 so this t-shirts 25 years old. Anyway, so, I think that was '96 and I was working at this holiday centre and the role that I had was very much around erm, I suppose on the sort of Pontins model, what...you know... Butlins kind of model, a sort of a Red Coat or Blue Coat or whatever it's called but also a care assistant, so I was doing a lot of it was actual, physical care, so wiping people's backsides and showering them and dressing them and performing their care needs, but also being...making sure that people were... um... entertained, so that they were er, actually, you know, having a great holiday. Erm, which if you're able bodied going on holiday is no big thing, if you're disa... if you're profoundly disabled just leaving the house is a big thing. And so the job was say, partly care assistant but partly it was about making sure that people who very, very rarely had the opportunity to go on holiday, had a great time on holiday, and that could mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people, so for example, as I was thinking about this, as I was getting the t-shirt out, I was remembering one guy that I worked with, who...was at home essentially bed ridden, um, he was... a man... er, he was probably in his 30s at the time... but no, maybe a bit older than that, 40s, but essentially bedridden by his disability obviously, er, and rarely had an opportunity to leave the house for example, and his great pleasure, that he took from being on holiday at this holiday centre was... me being able to take him er, to the pub and have a pint with him. And because of his disability he was hardly verbal. I mean he struggled to... erm, to, to speak, so he was...struggled, very difficult to move, but he wanted to go...you know, he wanted to go to the pub, and have a pint with someone and I performed that role on pretty much a daily basis when he was there, and that gave him great joy. You know, the fact that he would, he would... that he could go to the pub, because we would enable him to go to the pub. Erm, and, so [pauses], so this was '96, so this was before the introduction of National Minimum Wage so I was working there and I was getting paid less than, what would now be the National er, Minimum Wage. Er, I lived on the site, so I didn't have to pay accommodation or food so... and the bar was subsidized, so I didn't really have any outgoings, but I didn't really make any money either. So I guess there was quite a lot of...altruism in what I was doing there. In terms of how I...you know, I wasn't really getting paid for what I was doing, yet I was still doing it, and, so I suppose this kind of, the altruism of John giving me this t-shirt, represents something about that period of my life when I was doing something altruistic as well, do you see what I mean? So that's why it's quite... that's... that's it's meaning back then, um, for me. There's something else there as well that I was going to say, which is about how erm, oh yeah, and I think also, the other this... this t-shirt represents is how, how er, [pauses] the immediacy of the reward of the work that I was doing. The fact that erm, you know that, just for that day, you could you know, make someone's life so much better by what we were doing and it was immediate. And, I've subsequently come down, bogged down in a job which is full of administration, bureaucracy, performance targets, that kind of immediacy of the reward of the, the pleasure of the work, has been [makes hand gesture] systematically removed from the job. And this t-shirt reminds me of a different time. [Nods] So that answers points 1 and 2, who gave it to me and the...and when I got it. So the third point of what it's come to represent now, which is something completely different. Erm,

which is for some reason it's become my travel t-shirt, whenever I'm travelling any significant distance I wear this t-shirt and I don't really know why. It...I mean it's quite a big t-shirt, it's quite a comfortable t-shirt so, you know, you want kinda comfy clothes when you're travelling for any distance don't you? But yeah, so somehow this has become my travelling t-shirt, and I think this t-shirt has been all over the world with me, er, it's been to New York in fact, erm, it's been to...erm, other parts of the States, it's been to Cuba, it's been to Bulgaria, France erm, hang on, I can't even think...you know, but yeah this...so this t-shirt has become my...my travelling t-shirt, it's the one I wear when I'm travelling, I don't really know why because...maybe because it represents travel, erm, on it, but yeah, erm, so that's the third reason.

S: So can you say a bit more about, er, wearing it whilst travelling?

T: Erm, I don't really know what more to say about that other than that I just...it becomes my default, it's just become like a reflex 'Right, I'm travelling, I'll wear this t-shirt'.

S: Do you wear it on the journey or when you get there?

T: On the journey.

S: Ok, there and back or just on the way there?

T: Just on the way there normally, unless there's a laundrette when you get there [laughs]

S: [Laughs] And so why do you keep it?

T: Erm, well for the reasons I've mentioned above, the fact that it holds erm, symbolic meaning around ... well a whole load of stuff that I just went into.

S: So, how do you feel when you wear it?

T: Er... well usually when I wear it is when we're going er, when we're travelling, erm, so...usually quite excited because if we're going somewhere new or interesting or on holiday I'm obviously excited. Erm, also, but often with some trepidation because I don't er...for example I don't er...you know, I can find travel quite exhausting, particularly if you're travelling on public transport for any length of time, that can be quite, erm, tiring, erm [pauses] and then there's all the other sort of, all the other sort of, you know, worries about have I remembered my passport? And all that kind of thing [laughs] that go with erm, with, with, with er, travel.

S: Er, when it got given to you did you wear it in the, you know, intervening years from when, is it John?

T: Yeah.

S: Gave it to you and before it became your travel t-shirt, did you wear it? How did you wear it then?

T: Er, I don't think I did, I can't remember, I don't know.

S: So why did, if you said you liked the t-shirt, and then he gave it you,

T: Yeah,

S: But you never wore it?

T: I, I honestly can't remember, I might have done.

S: So when you asked him, when you said you liked the t-shirt, were you expecting to give it to him, what prompted you to say you liked the t-shirt?

T: Because I just liked the t-shirt. [pauses] I like the, the... erm the, the framing of the, the framing of the imagery, I suppose it's kind of erm, it er, what's the, erm, oh the there... there's a theory isn't there? About the shape of an image and where things are in terms of thirds and all that kind of thing and it fits that quite nicely. With Tintin here, Snowy down here and then this structure here to... but it's part of the boat isn't it? That balances out Tintin there. With the...the, the, the um, horizon basically cutting across the centre of the image and, and, so I think it's just...it's just, it works really well as an image.

S: And had you been to New York?

T: No, er, no [folds up t-shirt] no I hadn't and subsequently of course I've been on the Staten Island ferry, there and back I suppose 4 times since then so I've seen that view from the back of the Staten ... well, ah from certainly from the back of the Staten Island ferry a couple of times since then.

S: Mmm, it is pretty accurate as well, I'm looking at it now being like, that *is* just how it looks!

T: Yeah [laughs],

S: Even though it's a cartoon.

T: Yeah.

S: So when you were working at the, er...

T: I mean, I'm sorry, the other thing I was going to say was, I mean...I suppose, I did read the Tintin...I mean as a child, I did read Hergé's Tintin books.

S: Mmm,

T: Erm, and I quite enjoyed them I suppose. Er [pauses] so yeah, but...you know I don't...yeah as a child I did read the books so maybe that had something to do with it as well.

S: Mmm. So when you were working at the disabled holiday camp,

T: Mmm,

S: Was that before you went to college, went to uni, because....

T: Yeah, it was before I went to uni.

S: I don't think you've said, er, about your jobs.

T: It was before I went to university yeah.

S: So can you say a little bit about your jobs?

T: Er ...

S: That you had from then until now?

T: What from when I got this?

S: Yeah.

T: Erm...

S: So you were what? 22?

T: In '96...er....[pauses] 23 yeah, something like that.

S: Yeah.

T: Yeah.

S: And so you did this job as er, care assistant slash ...

T: Mmm,

S: Butlins Red Coat and then ...

T: After that I went to university. Erm.

S: What did you do at university?

T: Er, lots of stuff... I... er ...

S: What subject did you do?

T: Oh I see, oh I did er, I did BA in Sociology and Social Policy which I then converted into an MSc in Social Work.

S: And then after that?

T: Er, I became a Social Worker in...for...in children's services, in...er...working with children and families doing assessment of children in need and children at risk of significant harm and then after that I worked in Youth Justice working with, erm, young people at risk of offending and subsequent to that I've been a Social Work Lecturer, which is what I do now.

S: And so, how did you decide to do Sociology and Social Policy at uni?

T: Er... um... well I think the plan at that point to... to become a Social Worker so it was erm, working towards doing a Social Work qualification, which at the time was the DipSo, the Diploma in Social Work, which was the qualification you needed in order to practice as a social worker. Erm, and there was various routes to achieving that and in terms of the route that's...the, the, the route that, I guess showed the most...was most academically appealing was this route offered by the university that I went to. That started ... where basically where so went through ... so started ... you know ... you did a BA in Sociology and Social Policy and then did a year conversion to an MSc in Social Work. Erm, yeah it was just... the, the, the most [pauses] academically interesting route that I could... I could find and I think that's the, er, would still be the case if that program was still running but it closed a couple of years ago.

S: Mmm. So what was your relationship with er, John, the guy who gave you the t-shirt?

T: Erm, bizarrely not...considering he gave me his t-shirt, not a lot really, I didn't really know him that well. Er, I used to have the occasional drink with him after work, [pauses] not...not even on a one to one basis but, you know, quite often, at the end of a long shift, he would buy, you know, a group, you know, he'd see a group of us and he'd sort of 'Come on, I'll buy you...I'll buy you a pint.'

S: Was he on the same level as you? Was he a manager? Older or younger?

T: He was... he was the manager of the centre.

S: Oh, ok.

T: Yeah.

S: And how did you get that job?

T: Volunteering.

S: So you volunteered there first?

T: Volunteered there yeah, did two...two weeks? A week? Two weeks? Volunteering. So even more...in terms of altruism even...you know [laughs] I was actually, you know, wiping people's arses and that for nothing. Literally for nothing [laughs].

S: And what made you, what made you wanna go do that job?

T: Erm, it was part of er...it was part of...erm, a Princes Trust initiative, and like I said I was in a...and I don't really want to go into too much detail really about it all, but sort of end of one era of my life and sort of looking to what to do next sort of thing and I was listening to the radio one day and it sort of said "Are you 18-25, not sure what to do with your life...." or something like that "and if so give us a call cause we're doing this really interesting stuff, erm, get in touch" So I did, I phoned them up and I said "Yeah, I kind of fit your criteria" and they said "Oh, cool, come down and meet us" so I went to meet them and they...it's...they did this...The Princes Trust did this, I think it was a 12 week...sort of personal development course that involved doing lots of, sort of, good works so erm, one of the things we did is we built an adventure playground for children in a village somewhere that didn't have a adventure playground and, and then say part of it was that you had to go and do a week of...of voluntary work and I ended up at this, this organisation somewhere just south of London, er, doing...spending a week...I think it was a week volunteering as a care assistant slash Ents team [laughs] And yeah so I did that and they liked me and they said "Look why don't you come and spend some time here and we'll pay you less than minimum wage?" [laughs] Which they didn't say because no one had even heard of minimum wage at the time [laughs].

S: And er, when it become thought of as treasured or special?

T: Erm, [pauses] when you asked me to think of a treasured item [laughs] and I thought about what actu...and I started to think about well what ah...what items of clothing have meaning to me beyond, you know, some of the statement pieces that we talked about earlier which have meaning because I spent money on them or they, you know, they have a particular style to them or something like that...and I thought no, I need...what actually has meaning in terms of...affect. And this immediately came to mind.

S: So did you think of it...you said you thought of it of your travel t-shirt before, how did you think of it before?

T: Er, just, erm, [pauses] I think before that, and you asked me this before about what my relationship was with this t-shirt between it being my travel t-shirt and



being gifted this t-shirt and I think it's always kind of been in my pile of t-shirts but I haven't really worn it because...it was a gift and I didn't...you know what I mean, I didn't wanna...erm, [pauses] er, wear it, because, you know, something might, might happen to it or something. But as I say, subsequently it has become my travel t-shirt, I'm also trying to think, is there a hole in it somewhere? No, I'm thinking of a different t-shirt that's got a hole in it. Yeah, it's not this one [laughs]. Er, [pauses] so I think it's kind of, you know, in...in, just in a general pile of t-shirts that don't get worn very often I think is where it's probably been for [laughs] a significant number of years.

S: Mmm. So between it being your travel t-shirt and you being given it, you didn't wear it but you kept it.

T: Yeah.

S: And you kept it because someone had given to you?

T: Yeah.

S: Ok, so what is the future for this item?

T: I think it will probably continue to be my travel t-shirt, erm, I mean it's, so it's 25 years old, it's still in relatively good condition, I mean it's frayed around the...you know....not frayed, it's a bit pulled around the collar, but it probably has been for at least the last decade [laughs] so that's probably not going to change too much. Erm, I dunno, it might last another 25 years [laughs].

S: And are you planning to get rid of it at any point?

T: No.

S: What would make...what would have to happen to it for you to get rid of it?

T: I think it would have...if it started falling apart I think. I mean what's interesting is because normally with t-shirts like this that are printed the, the, the, the...as they get washed the print starts to wear off don't they? And the white, the white bit has...worn a bit...but the, the pink and the yellow and the green seem fairly...I mean they're faded but in tact you know what I mean?

S: Mmm,

T: Whereas you can the white is starting to kind of crack and break up, so, I dunno, we'll see won't we?

S: And erm, how would you feel if you lost it?

T: Erm, [pauses] I'd be a bit annoyed, but I wouldn't be overly upset I don't think no.

S: Erm is there a garment that you wished you still had that you would think of as special or treasured if you did still have it? So is there anything you've lost or don't have anymore?

T: [Pauses] Erm, I can't...think, nothing springs to mind. No I can't think of anything...I'm sure there is but I can't think.

S: Oh, can you tell me about where you store the garment?

T: Er, yeah it's um, er, fold...folded, there's a pile of t-shirts on a shelf in the bedroom and it's folded and placed in that pile.

S: Let's see. We can go see it.

T: Can we now?

S: Yeah, let's go see.

T: So, yeah it lives right about there [places t-shirt in pile].

S: So how are your t-shirts organised?

T: Erm, they're all lighter coloured ones, they're all darker coloured printed ones, and those are all plain black and white ones there, and then gym kit t-shirts are there. Dunno what that is [gestures to shelf]

S: That's mine that middle one.

T: [laughs] I know.

S: So was it always stored in this way? Or has it had a special spot?

T: Erm, I think it's always been stored like that as long as we've had those shelves.

S: No, but in your other houses?

T: Erm...

S: Does it live with all your other t-shirts?

T: Yeah, it does.

S: So has it always been stored with the t-shirts that it's stored with now?

T: Yes.

S: In the main bit of your wardrobe or your drawer?

T: Yeah.

S: However you store the t-shirts?

T: Yeah.

S: Ok, and how is cared for?

T: Erm, I...I...it goes, it goes in the wash with any of...it goes in a reds wash...after I've worn it.

S: And how do think that t-shirt fits into your style?

T: Erm,

S: Would you have bought that t-shirt for yourself?

T: Er, if I had have done I would have bought it a size smaller.

S: [Laughs],

T: [Laughs],

S: Yeah but do you think it fits with your style or not?

T: Erm ... not ... er no it probably...it doesn't...I'm trying to think of other printed t-shirts that I've got like and it's not, I haven't got much like it.

S: Mmm,

T: I can think of.

S: Did it fit with your style when you got it?

T: Er...

S: What did you wear at the time you got it?

T: Yeah, I was probably into baggier clothes back then than I am now.

S: Yeah.

T: Yeah.

S: But like the design of the t-shirt?

T: No, probably not.

S: No?

T: No.

S: So how's it different to t-shirts you wear?

T: Erm, there's a lot more going on.

S: Right.

T: In terms of image and the type and colours.

S: And what kind of t-shirts do you normally wear?

T: Erm, usually black or white.

S: Right, so what's an average outfit for you?

T: Erm, pair of trainers, pair of blue jeans, black v neck t-shirt and a hoodie.

S: Ok, is there anything else you'd like to say?

T: No.

S: Have you got any other points you'd like to raise?

T: No I don't think so.

S: Ok thank you very much.

T: Thank you.

-----ENDS-----

## 10.9 Abbie Interview Transcript

S: Cool, so can you confirm that you've read and signed the participant information sheet?

A: Er, yeah I have.

S: And signed the consent form?

A: Yeah.

S: Ok and can you just tell me a little bit about yourself?

A: Erm, my name's Abbie, I'm in my third year at Goldsmiths studying Design, erm, I'm 21...that's about it [laughs].

S: Er, can you tell me a bit more about university?

A: Er yeah so I...erm, study design and I'm kind of interested in, like, making adults more playful and trying to, like, re-install a playfulness in everyday life and make adults think a bit more like children, like, getting adults to use their imagination and stuff, erm, so that's like what I'm interested in on my course and then, yeah, uni's pretty good [laughs], yeah.

S: What do you do outside of uni?

A: Erm, climbing...

S: Cool.

A: In Brompton yeah, with my brother and his friends and I have a horse so I horse ride and charity shopping, love charity shopping [laughs]!

S: And, what about er, friends? Family?

A: Erm, I have a brother, erm, who lives down the road and then I have sister who's still living at home and then she's hopefully gonna go to uni soon, next year. Then my Mum and Dad live at home with my dog and my two cats erm....

S: Where's home?

A: In Sussex.

S: And how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

A: Erm, I always think it changes my mood a lot, I'm not particularly interested in fashion as in, following trends and stuff but I think when I dress in more like fun exciting clothes it makes me behave in a more fun and exciting way, so I think if I dress like, based on how I'm feeling it can be quite obvious erm, what my mood is, but yeah I think wearing exciting clothes affects my mood in a positive way so I try and dress quite fun most of the time.

S: Ok, great that leads to my next question about erm, how would you describe your style?

A: Erm, it's quite eclectic and random because I buy a lot of my clothes from charity shops, it sort of is like what I find and it doesn't always mesh together very well, erm, so it will just be like, odd pieces that I think are exciting but I think, yeah, probably a bit of a random look in the end [laughs].

S: And where do you get your inspiration...fashion inspiration from?

A: Erm...

S: Or how do you choose your clothes I guess?

A: I think I quite often will just go for something that I haven't seen before.

S: Mmm,

A: So if I haven't seen someone else wearing it then I'm kind of drawn to it, because then in my head I think it's like a one-off piece that only I have.

S: Mmm.

A: Erm, yeah so...yeah, there's building work next door [there's a loud beeping in the background].

S: Oh...sorry, you were saying...

A: Erm, yeah so like just stuff that I haven't seen around.

S: Mmm.

A: That's why like, as well like environmental reasons that's why I tend to shop in...to shop in charity shops, because I'm kind of guaranteed that I'll not see anyone else wearing whatever I'm wearing.

S: Mmm, so, oh we've covered this a little bit, how expensive is each item and the general price points?

A: Mmm, I would say between £5 and £10.

S: Mmhm.

A: Like, most things I buy are from charity shops so I guess I'd say quite cheap, yeah [laughs].

S: And do you shop anywhere else apart from charity shops?

A: Mmmm, I'm trying to think of the last thing I bought that wasn't from a charity shop, I think it's probably like, a plain white t-shirt or something.

S: Yeah.

A: But yeah, other than that I don't...oh and shoes, I don't buy shoes in charity shops...erm, yeah.

S: So what would be an expensive item for you?

A: Erm, I guess I like...shoes are expensive because they don't really vary that much in price.

S: Mmm,

A: Erm, so I guess, I probably, for what I spend the most on, that would be shoes and [pauses] maybe, oh I have an expensive leather jacket, but I feel a bit funny about wearing it now cause I'm vegetarian [laughs] and yeah I don't really like the idea of being hugged by a dead cow, but, yeah.

S: So, the leather jacket and white t-shirts and shoes you don't buy from charity shops?

A: Mmm,

S: Can you tell me about the last 3 things that you've bought?

A: Erm, one thing, oh it was a Burberry trench coat that I found in a charity shop that was £20, erm, oh the...the like vintage scarf [gestures to a scarf hung up on the wardrobe behind her] thing up there and, oh, this pair of jeans [gestures to the jeans she's wearing] yeah.

S: Ok great, why do you enjoy shopping in charity shops over other shops?

A: Erm, firstly it's like an environmental thing, giving clothes like, another life, erm, and because the clothes are more unique, and I kind of like the idea that someone else has lived in them and knowing that, like, maybe they've not done anything exciting wearing them, but the idea that there potentially could have been like a big adventure wearing those clothes I find quite exciting [laughs] and also it's a lot more

rewarding I think when you find something that fits really well and that's...yeah, compared to like if anyone else could buy it, I guess, it's kind of like hunting for it.

S: Mm, when did you start shopping in charity shops? Have you always done it or?

A: Erm, probably... I think it originally, was, like, when I left school and then I didn't have a job and I didn't really have any money so it was just like, easier and cheaper.

S: Mm,

A: Erm, but then, I think, probably when I came to uni was when I, like, stopped buying from, like retail shops completely.

S: So is it very much a conscious decision for you?

A: Yeah.

S: Ok great and how easy or difficult do you find it to throw clothes away? Or, not throw them away but...divest of them.

A: I have quite, I think I have quite like a fast turnover because I know that I've given my clothes a second life I'm not that precious about most things, so I have quite a quick rate of like, taking clothes to charity shops and buying new clothes so I'm not particularly attached to like anything and I don't really...I think I get bored of clothes quite quickly so I don't really get like, a long life out of them, yeah.

S: Um, so where do the clothes go when you decide to take them out of your wardrobe?

A: Erm, sometimes to my sister or my friends and then other clothes...well some clothes just wear out completely so then they get thrown away or used as like, cleaning rags.

S: Mm.

A: Erm, or I...sometimes will like, if it's a nice piece of material, I'll just like, make a headscarf-y sort of thing out of it or something, or they just go back to charity shops.

S: Right so buy from charity shops...

A: Mmhm,

S: And then give back to them again?

A: Yeah.

S: Like, a circle. Ok cool, can you show me your treasured garment please?



A: Yep [gets up to get garment],

S: Thanks. And, can you tell me a bit about it?

A: Erm, so it was my Mum's...er, I've got the photos here [reaches to get photos],

S: Ah, lovely, thanks.

A: Erm, here if you want, [hands over photos] you can keep them, erm, yeah so it was my Mum's, in, like, the 90s and so there's like photos of my Mum wearing it, like pushing my brother round in his push chair, erm, and then I found out later that my Nana worked in an exhibition centre in Hawkes Bay which is New Zealand, erm, which is where my family's from and the Exhibition Centre made this t-shirt and it was a limited edition, so she said they made 100 t-shirts erm, so this is 1 of 100 and maybe the only one left, which I kind of like the idea of. Erm, yeah and so it was made for an exhibition in Hawkes Bay at the Gallery Centre that my Nana ran, erm ... and I...the imagery on it, so it's like, the sun is because Hawkes Bay is like known for being, erm, like, the sunny part, erm and they grow, like grapes there and have a lot of wine from there, erm, and it's like the Art Deco capital, so it's like, Art Deco references as well, erm. Yeah, and then I think when I got into, like... I probably had a very plain style like all throughout school and stuff I just wore the same thing as everyone else, then I think when I started actually thinking about what I was wearing and be...being more interested in my image then I remembered that my Mum had this t-shirt and that she wore it like when I was a kid and I was like 'Ah do you still have it?' and then she did have it, erm, so now I wear it quite a lot but I'm also quite conscious that it's like, starting to like fray round the edges and stuff so, um, yeah, I'm not sure, I'm a bit torn whether I should keep wearing until it completely dies or if I should like preserve it and stop wearing it...I'm not sure....yeah.

S: So, how do you think your style changed? You mentioned it was plain and then you started thinking more about that, when and why did that happen?

A: I think ... I think a lot of that was probably because at school I was always wearing uniform so I ... I would wear, like, I guess my own clothes only at the weekends and the holidays and because I do a lot of like, I'm quite into like gardening and horse riding and like being outside, I was always wearing, like my scruffy clothes so I didn't spend a lot of time or money like investing in clothes which were like, fashionable or whatever. So I...I t was always just like skinny jeans and a t-shirt although [laughs] that is what I'm today! But um, yeah it was kind of ... I guess I just ... it wasn't really important to me then. Whereas when I was ... particularly when I did my art foundation in Brighton so I was wearing my own clothes everyday and then when I moved to London and had realized that it does actually affect how I feel and stuff that's probably when I decided that I should like, put more effort into what I wear...yeah.

S: The t-shirt, so did your Nan wear it as well, or did she...

A: Yeah, she said she has a version of it, but it like, is long gone, erm, yeah and I think she used to wear it like at the Exhibition Centre where she worked as like part of the promotion stuff, erm, but yeah. I think she said as well that there's...she thought that there was a signature, like somewhere in it but I can't find it, of like, the guy who designed it, but...

S: Do you know who the designer is, are they famous?

A: No, so I asked her and she said it was someone local but she couldn't remember his name, erm, yeah, but I, I don't know who designed it, and I'm really, like curious to know. But yeah, I'm not sure, she didn't know either.

S: And how often do you wear it?

A: Mmmm...maybe like once a fortnight? Roughly, yeah, probably like once a fortnight.

S: Erm, what do you wear it with? What's like an outfit that it would go with?

A: Erm, either, usually just like jeans, and then I wear the same boots everyday so like, black boots, and, usually like one of those headscarf-y things. Erm and then maybe, black jacket...yeah, probably that.

S: And do you have any particular memories of you or someone else wearing it? Any instances?

A: Erm, I can remember my Mum wearing it...like, when I was a kid but I don't really remember specific like, occasions, I just remember like seeing it, and then when she bought it back and suddenly I was like 'Oh you used to always wear that' erm, and then I've worn it a lot to like, uni and stuff, so I guess this is probably like if people at uni were like 'What's Abbie's signature outfit?' they would probably, maybe, remember this t-shirt, so I guess it's kind of like my uni 'look' [laughs].

S: And how do you feel when you're wearing it?

A: I think...I like it because, well firstly because it's really soft because it's really old so it's really comfortable erm, and I like, like the colours and stuff, make me feel like, happy I guess, um, and I also like it because a lot of the time people will comment on it and then I get to say like 'Oh, it's like from the Exhibition Centre my Nana worked in' so it lets me, kind of like, tell a little story and I like idea of clothes have like, a bit of a narrative behind them.

S: Mmm, and, oh, what was I going to ask...it was about wearing it...hang on [pauses] no. Er, when did it become thought of as treasured or special?

A: Erm, I think, last year my Nana visited, she's over visiting at the moment from New Zealand.

S: Mmm,

A: She visited last summer as well.

S: Oh she still lives there?

A: Yeah, erm and I was wearing it and then she told me about the limited edition thing and the fact that there were only 100. Because obviously I knew that I wouldn't be able to get another version of it, but I think knowing that there were only 100 made in the first place means that like, it probably is the last one left, or it's like, been, I dunno, they're like spread around the world. So erm, yeah I think just knowing that it was a limited edition...limited edition in the first place...yeah.

S: Mmm, so how often do you see your Nan then if she lives all the way in New Zealand?

A: Erm, maybe like once every 2 years probably? Yeah.

S: So we've covered this a little bit but what's the future for your item?

A: Erm, I'm hoping that...my Nana was saying that it was like a really thick t-shirt when they had it made so I'm hoping it's not like quite at the end of it's life yet even though it's a bit see through now. Erm, so I think I'll continue wearing it, erm, but maybe like, try and not wash it very often, maybe I'll start hand washing it? Erm, and caring for it like it's a...like a designer piece of clothing or something. Erm, but I think even if it does get really like holey and tatty I'll probably just keep it and maybe not wear it or just wear it as pajamas or something. But I think I'll hold onto it for a long time.

S: Ok great, and can you show me, er, where you store your garment please?

A: Er, yeah, it's like, in this drawer [opens top drawer], in my t-shirt drawer.

S: So does it live ... does it have it's special place or does it live with the t-shirts?

A: No, it lives with the...like with my other t-shirts but it tends to be on the top of the pile just because I wear it a lot so it's usually like, at the top. But, it lives just here [places t-shirt in drawer].

S: Aw. And, that's what I was going to ask ... I've remembered, erm, would you say it's in keeping with your usual style? Or does it digress from that?

A: I think because it's ... because it was like made in the 90s and like, in these pictures like, my parents, and like, my brother, [shows the photos to the camera]

erm, their wearing quite similar t-shirts with the big motif kind of thing and like bright colours and that's sort of like hand drawn look I think, and I'm quite into like, the 90s, so I think it probably does fit into my style in that way. And because it's like, authentic, I guess it kind of is like the 'vintagey' look which I quite often wear.

S: Mmm,

A: Yeah, I'd say it does.

S: Great, let me just pop this back here...there we go, and, oh we covered this a little bit how...how is it cared for?

A: Mmm...[laughs]

S: Mmm...[laughs]

A: It isn't...like I don't really do any thing very special with it, I just, I think I am a bit conscious of like how often I wash it.

S: Mmm.

A: Which maybe sounds a bit gross but like, I wouldn't want wash it every wear just because I'm con...worried about it getting, like, battered around in the washing machine.

S: And are there any other garments in your wardrobe that you'd struggle to throw away or not want to get rid of? Because you said you had quite a high turnover of garments.

A: Erm, I think...I used to have...there was like a jumper that my...the same Nana knitted and it was my Dad's, and I always remember as a kid, like, I dunno like, if he was like, hugging me I remember like the feeling of that jumper and then he...like it got a bit tatty so he didn't want it any more so he gave it to me but then I didn't realize, I was quite young and didn't realize you weren't meant to put them in the washing machine...so it's about this big [makes small, square gesture with her hands] so that had to go. But that would have been another treasured thing. But unfortunately...yeah...that [laughs]

S: [laughs]

A: That got damaged, I'm not...I don't think I'm attached to anything else though in my wardrobe, yeah.

S: Ok great, and, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the garment or opinions on fashion or clothes or how you put your looks together?

A: Erm, I guess I have quite a strong opinion on like the fast fashion thing, just because I think a lot of people, they don't actually think about the fact that once you throw away your clothes or give them to a charity shop they end up in land fill and that they don't erm, like break down, it takes like, a long time for clothes to like, bio degrade so, I guess, just like the fact that a lot of people don't buy things consciously and they just, buy clothes because they want them and they don't necessarily think about like, the longevity of whatever their buying. Erm and I guess also, people buying clothes because other people are wearing it, rather than buying clothes that they like, erm, yeah I think, I tend to not really follow trends, just because I know that...I kind of know what I like and I also think dressing for your body shape and what's flattering on you and what you feel comfortable in is really important, and I think when people stick to trends too rigidly then it means that they start coming away from that, which, can be a positive thing because they're obviously like, going out of their comfort zone and trying new things but I think a lot of the time it ends up being that like people wear something for a season or a few weeks and then realize it's not really their style, and then it ends up in charity shops or landfill or whatever, so...yeah I guess sticking to your...what you actually like, and sometimes merging trends into that but mostly, I think I feel quite strongly about people buying clothes that they like because they like the item rather than like, liking a trend.

S: Mmm.

A: Yeah.

S: And, so is that how you approach buying clothing then?

A: Yeah, I think, I look for like, clothes which are like good quality, so like materials are quite important to me, like I try and buy like cotton or linen and stuff, rather like, than plastic-y materials. Erm, just because I know that when I wear clothes made of natural materials they feel much nicer so then I'm more inclined to wear them, and it just means that they get more use. Erm, so yeah I think I'm quite conscious about what materials and...yeah I guess, making sure that when I buy stuff I like think about where I'd wear it and when I'd wear it, how I'd style it and stuff so I know that I feel confident in the fact that I'd wear it enough times to make it a worthwhile purchase.

S: Mmm. How much do you think you spend per month on clothes?

A: Erm...[pauses] probably like £20,

S: How many, how many items would that be?

A: Erm, maybe 4 or 5 things.

S: And how do you decide when you need something new?

A: Oh...that's probably like [laughs] where my...where I fall down slightly because I tend to like every time I walk past a charity shop I just like, dip in, which means I quite often end up coming out with like, 1 item so maybe I spend more than £20 some months because it kinda depends how much I find. But then other months I wouldn't buy anything, erm, but yeah, it's quite like, random and sporadic just because it depends like when I find stuff.

S: Mmm,

A: Because it's all like a bit hit and miss with charity shops.

S: Yeah, ok great is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: No, I don't think so no.

S: Ok, thank you very much.

A: That's Ok [smiles]

-----ENDS-----

### 10.10 Phoebe Interview Transcript

S: Ok, can you please confirm that you have read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form?

P: Yes, I can.

S: Perfect, and can you tell me a little bit about yourself first?

P: Yep, erm, so my name's Phoebe and I live in Camberwell [laughs], erm, I work as an animator and illustrator, I love drawing, erm, and I just came back from a yoga class so I feel really balanced and nice. Erm, yeah, what else would you like to know?

S: Er, where do you work?

P: I work at a studio called [redacted] in Kings Cross, erm who are a small illustration and animation studio, erm, I work there full time as an animator and I worked...oh, there's a moth [wafts it away]... er, to, yeah communicate things and communicate complicated stories for different clients and charities and stuff, erm, yeah, it's a lovely job.

S: Cool and erm, how long have you lived in London?

P: I've lived...I moved down for university in Kingston, so Greater London in 2008, and then I moved to Camberwell in 2012, so I've moved...I've lived here...for...6 years! [laughs]

S: [Laughs]

P: And that's...I'm very good at Maths [laughs].

S: That always happens to me as well I'm like 'It's 2016...17...18, when people ask me how old I am I'm like 30...2'

P: [Laughs] yes, ooooh.

S: Erm, so have you always lived in this flat?

P: Yeah, since I moved to Camberwell, mmhm.

S: Yeah, and the same room, same housemates?

P: Er no, we started off with 5 of us in here,

S: Oh my gosh,

P: So like 2 in here, 2 in the middle room and 1 in the...in the small room [laughs] and the boyfriends moved out for everyone's sanity and then, er, yeah only recently me and Shane [pseudonym] have had the flat to ourselves as like, a couple of weeks so it's gone from five to two [laughs].

S: Oh right,

P: Yeah, it feels really spacious now.

S: Yeah, and um, family? Friends? Can you tell me about them?

P: Yeah, I've got um, my brother, just up the road, who's the reason why we came to Camberwell in the first place after we graduated we were like 'Right, we'll move to London, could be anywhere' and he was like 'move to SE5', so that's really nice having him close by and I've got erm, my sister lives in Hackney and my Mum and Dad live in er, Norfolk, just outside Norwich in Norfolk erm, in a small village so I grew up in the countryside with them, and um, yeah, friends, I have, I'm lucky to have friends next door, with Emily and Catherine and Claire [pseudonyms] there and er, my buddies have just moved like, a couple of roads away that way [gestures to the back of the house], which is lovely.

S: Oh great,

P: Yeah, friends about.

S: Yeah, and what do you do in your spare time?

P: Erm, animation seems to take up...all of my time! No, it's not quite true, erm, I do yoga a lot, I also do gardening and trying to tend the, the yard out there [laughs] when I can, it's looking a bit of a mess at the moment but...

S: I'm also so jealous of the yard,

P: Aw,

S: When I come down I'm like 'Ah, it's so beautiful!'

P: Aw, you can come and hang out in it, it's a shared yard [smiles],

S: Yeah,

P: Yeah, apart from the bins it's very nice [laughs],

S: [Laughs] You need a like, a little screen, they should put them behind something,

P: Yeah, that would be nice,



S: Yeah, we could email the estate agents but...

P: Yeah 'Could we have a Japanese screen to go up?' [laughs], I feel like that would be impractical but yeah, it's...it's a nice yard.

S: Yeah, and so how do you feel about clothes and fashion?

P: Erm, yeah quite mixed, I don't...I don't know, I don't feel like incredibly comfortable or like, I have a way towards it, I've always felt, very like, swayed by others around me, I don't know...and part of me is like I love colour and I love pattern and I love, like, I'm into design and illustration and those things so, erm, but then yeah, I don't think that [pauses] er, yeah, what am I trying to say? Erm, it doesn't make me feel incredibly comfortable, I don't really like shopping and I don't really like acquiring new things, I'm more of a hoarder of old things and I love finding like, a find in the charity shop [laughs].

S: Mmm,

P: I think that's partly to do with like, yeah being this...like, my, yeah [laughs] my Dad's a Methodist, or was like, brought up as a Methodist in Yorkshire and so he was really tight and my Mum's always worn like, incredible bright colours and like wears loads of blue and like...brightly coloured jewellery and stuff, but um, yeah I think it's, it is something that I enjoy, but I don't feel...I feel like I can look at other, other friends and other people and think like 'Oh, they're really well put together,' they're really like...even if they're wearing something really, like casual, they've got like, an individual style, because I don't really, it's just harder to see your own approach to things, I always find with drawing as well I'm like 'Oh I don't know what I do', but then, maybe it's more obvious to other people.

S: Yeah, it's easier to see someone else's than your own,

P: Yeah,

S: So I mean, how would you describe your style then, if you had to? Sorry!

P: Erm, nooo, ha, I mean, it's fine [laughs] yeah, I'm not the best candidate for this, I would say like...I used to wear like insane amounts of colour and pattern, and just like clashing patterns and stuff, especially when I look back at pictures of myself in art school...like wow [laughs]!

S: [Laughs],

P: How did I get away with that? Like, I look insane [laughs]! And now erm, I think, I've tried to like, tone it down, just have, like, some bright patterned stuff [gestures to her trousers, they're a mustard yellow with a small cream leaf pattern] and yeah, bits of colour, but more drawn to like, neutral things and black and yeah, try and balance it a little bit [laughs].

S: Where do you get your fashion or style inspiration from, like how do you, how do you choose clothes, what's your criteria when you're like, if you need to go shopping or when you go shopping, how do you choose something that you're like 'Oh, this...this is going to look good on me' or 'this is definitely not for me'?

P: Yeah, it's difficult I...I read...I, the...the book about de cluttering with Marie Kondo,

S: Ooooh, yeah,

P: And I try to take that on...in mind, because I do find it really hard when I'm like, a bit overwhelmed in clothes shops just like...ah, see I'm looking for a, er, dress for my friends wedding which I'm the maid of honor for and there's this like amazing big colour scheme, but going round I just...it's like, it's really hard to find something that brings you joy and that's what Marie Kondo's advice is, it's like hold a thing, turn it round, try it on, and like see if it instantly like, gives you that sense of joy, I...I really like that as a guide. And like, so there's a lot of clothes that I, have kept because it does give you that like memory or joy around it. Erm, and there's other things I've discarded which were probably...probably ok, although, yeah, I am a bit of a hoarder [laughs].

S: Yeah,

P: Yeah,

S: So how often do you purchase clothing?

P: Mmm [pauses], erm, not very often, I tend to wear things until they have loads of holes in and stuff! Like this, but erm, maybe like every few months or something I'll, I do...I do more like, online shopping now and I'll get a big load and then, oh, by a big load I mean like, 3 items and then I'll send most of them back and be like 'ah, keep this nice thing,' erm, to avoid the like going into shops and that thing [laughs]. Yeah, I find it hard to find new things,

S: Mmm,

P: Maybe, I feel like I should be less precious about it.

S: What makes you shop online rather than going into shops?

P: Erm, I think, I guess it's the illusion of choice and that...that sense of like, oh you're not going to miss anything because everything's here, you're not gonna like...you can see things for what they are...also you can just get them delivered to you and then try them in the comfort of your home, where you can like, sit down and...and kind of, see if they fit right and stuff. Also you can access like other things that you can't on, erm, in shops on the high street and stuff,

S: Mmm,

P: So got a really nice pair of dungarees from Lucy and Yak recently and that's like something I wouldn't be able to find in real life.

S: Yeah, I've been wanting a pair of those,

P: Yeah, they're really comfy,

S: I've seen them on Instagram,

P: And they do organic cotton now, which is really great, so I think that's another thing I'm aware of is like how transient like a lot of things are, like people throwing away endless...kind of things going out of fashion or... like the throwaway nature of fashion just really, I find quite repulsive, so I think that's part of why I try to not shop when I don't need to and I think that the sort of anxiety or constant feeling like you need something is really unhelpful as well, like, it's something to occupy you're brain like 'Oh I need to get that dress, I need to get that dress...I...my life will be so much better if I have another T-shirt' like, you don't really need it and when....when you do have that t-shirt it just becomes part of the like infrastructure...you know like, part of your general, like, clutter of life...[laughs] and then it like, it's not...it's not the answer to needing something else in your life. Well, I dunno, yeah.

S: Yeah, it quickly becomes part of all your stuff, all your other stuff, like you said,

P: Yeah [nods] yeah,

S: So where do you shop online?

P: Erm, I...erm...I always am advertised 'Toast' and I always go on there and I'm like 'these are great, they're really expensive, I'll wait till the sale' then I get things in the sale. A but they're never quite as nice looking as the fresh like £200 jumper [laughs]!

S: [Laughs]

P: So Toast, um, and like, 'And Other Stories' um, I...yeah, sometimes ASOS but not very much, and I should look for more ethically sourced stuff, I think, yeah.

S: And, what's the general price point of each item or how much do you spend on clothes when you...when you do buy them, because you said you didn't buy them very often?

P: Yeah, er, I mean I try and buy things in the sale, I bought a jumper recently from like Cos, that was like £30 so, and then yeah...I've, I think, I was trying to buy things that were more...like, just be like, it's fine, I'm earning money, I can buy things, to try and get over that guilt. I bought a skirt for like, £70, but I don't really like the skirt [laughs]!

S: Oh no!

P: I regret it! It just brings me like, pain now [laughs],

S: [Laughs] it doesn't bring you joy?

P: Mm mm [shakes head] it doesn't, I actually was er, on my way out to work, I had a pile like, to return, and I put it on and I was just like, I'll wear this, this is fine, and then later I was like, aw, it's not very comfy, like, it's not...yeah, it's just not bringing me joy. But it was too late because I'd worn it to work, so yeah [laughs],

S: Oooh,

P: Sorry, I'm not really answering your questions,

S: No, that's ok, it's a fine answer, so what were the last 3 things you bought?

P: Mmm [pauses] the last 3 things I bought [pauses] were...um...I honestly can't remember! Er, I got a nice big, woolly jumper that's like bright orange and very soft and I've just been living in that recently, um, I got a yellow and white stripy t-shirt at the same time,

S: Where from?

P: Um, so they were both from Cos, in the sale, and then I the last three things?

S: Yeah,

P: So the third thing [laughs] oh I don't know! Um, I think I got something from a charity shop in Camberwell, and I'm trying to remember what it was...

S: Was it one of the new ones? There's been a couple of new charity shop openings,

P: Yeah, so exciting! Yeah, Claire [pseudonym] works in the Crisis one,

S: Oh right,

P: But it wasn't from there, I think it was from Cancer Research. Classic. [laughs].

S: Yeah [laughs],

P: Yeah, maybe a top of some kind, I don't, that's bad, I can't remember.

S: That's ok, um, oh we've touched on this a little bit but how easy or difficult do you find it to get rid of your clothes?

P: Yeah, I find it quite hard, I did a big...inspired by the Marie Kondo book, got all of my clothes out one day and sorted it through, held everyone and saw if it brought me joy, and tried to get rid of the ones that didn't. But there's so much more that I should have, or could have got rid of but I didn't, I think I associate a lot of memory and er...a lot of the clothes that I have, have been someone's given me them or I've inherited them from one of my sisters or my Mum or family members...erm, maybe they all see that I don't buy any clothes for myself [laughs]!

S: [Laughs],

P: Having 2 older sisters does help, um, so I think I associate things with people and then I feel some kind of...er, obligation to keep them I guess,

S: Mm, so when was your clear out?

P: That was before Shane moved in so about...just over a year ago?

S: Yeah,

P: Mmhm,

S: And have you had another one since then or?

P: Not really, I've thrown out the odd thing...maybe [laughs]! Potentially, yeah but for the amount of clothes that I actually use which is like this much [makes small gesture with her fingers] I probably have about this much [makes much larger gesture with hands].

S: Yeah, ok great, can you show me your treasured garment or garments?

P: Mmm, yeah, I got two out, this is a skirt that I found, it belonged to my Mum and I found it in a trunk in the attic, um, at my parents house, and I really love it! I love the colours, I love the, like...I just haven't seen a pattern like this, that's existed in the last like, 20 years, or more, but yeah, it used to fit really nicely and now the elastic has broken and it's like, massive. So it used to sit like around my waist really nicely and now it's...I'd either have to strap it on with a belt or yeah...I should replace the elastic I guess, but I'm yeah...I wouldn't really know how to, I should get my Mum to do it! [laughs],

S: [Laughs],

P: Yeah, and it's really soft and whenever I've worn it people have been like 'Wow...where have you...where did you get that from?' and I'm like "Oh hooo, in a trunk, in the attic!" I think the whole act of discovering it was very nice, and yeah, my Mum...yeah, just like childhood memories of my Mum wearing extreme colours and her...yeah, her still doing that. And when I first had it, it kind of still smelt like her, so yeah.

S: Aww,

P: So that's my lovely skirt.

S: Do you remember your Mum wearing this skirt in particular?

P: [Shakes head] I don't, yeah, I don't remember that, I think it must have been in the attic for a very long time.

S: Yeah, was there anything else in the trunk? Like, what prompted, what prompted the rummage in the trunk?

P: Um, there was like old...like, amazing old, 1980s like big shoulder padded jackets, and I think some things that we might have used for like 'dress up' and stuff, but clearly she hadn't put these things in with the like 'dressing up' box which was another thing where we had like velvet capes for being a witch in and stuff like that, erm, so they were clearly her like, favourite things that she couldn't bring herself to get rid of, but then she knew she'd never wear before. I think just as a inquisitive 18, maybe 20 year old, I was just...I can't remember why I was up there but...

S: Yeah,

P: I might have been looking for something or other. My Mum has other beautiful piece like this amazing orange...like this kind of orange and this pink [points to the colours on the skirt], like psychedelic velvet mini dress thing from when, she was a bit of a like...[gestures to a mini dress shape on her body]

S: Oh that sounds good,

P: Yeah, it's really gorgeous and it's gone missing, I don't know where it is, someone wore it for a costume party and now it's gone! It's like, makes me really sad knowing that it's...it must be somewhere...but...

S: Oh no,

P: Yeah, and she also has these like, a cheesecloth shirt with like green embroidery all over it and it's just...they're so nice, yeah, she was a bit of a hippy [smiles].

S: Yeah,

P: So yeah, there's some good pieces.

S: Did your Mum tell you anything about the skirt or like, why she kept it or...?

P: Um, no, I don't know where she got it, um...no, I don't remember that, I think, she was just like 'Oh yes of course you can have it darling',

S: Aw,

P: 'You'll look great in it' [laughs] like, yeah,

S: So did you ask for it then?

P: Mmm, yeah,

S: When you found it,

P: I think I was like 'Oh, do you mind if I borrow it?' [laughs],

S: [Laughs] Borrow it forever?

P: [Laughs] Long term borrow, yeah, yeah, but she's very supportive like that, I think she knew she wasn't going to wear it. She's also very, very short, so I don't know, like, even if I wear it up here [holds skirt up high on her waist],

S: Yeah, lets see...

P: It still comes down to the floor, so she's like, this tall [gestures to her chest height].

S: Yeah...oh!

P: So it would just be like [laughs], trailing on the floor, maybe she didn't wear it so high, yeah, but...

S: Or maybe she wore it really high...like a dress!

P: Yeah [laughs], yeah, yeah, yeah, it's literally like [holds dress up at her chest] which is how I'd have to wear it now! [laughs]. Erm, yeah, I've worn it to like Notting Hill [Carnival] and fun times, which it reminds me of, yeah.

S: Yeah, so, sorry, I'm just coming down with a cold...so apart from...you said it's been worn in Notting Hill, for the Carnival?

P: Mmhm,

S: And other fun times, do you have any specific memories of times you've worn it?

P: I remember wearing it to a literature festival in, erm, in Norwich, where...and I remember someone...I remember it because someone was like, like, got out of their chair and was like 'Where's that skirt from?', like really like 'Ooo!' [makes shocked face] after we'd just watched like, Geoff Dyer and some other amazing like authors doing readings and like, a discussion about the importance of photography in

contemporary storytelling...it was a really good day, erm, and yeah, I remember wearing it for that, erm, there's a picture of us when we've just moved in and we're on the back step there and me and my, erm, the friends that I moved in with like, just standing there looking really happy and I'm wearing this [the skirt] there in that photo. And then, there must have been loads of other times, but those are the yeah... the main ones.

S: So was it worn quite regularly? When did...when did you stop wearing it? When did you have to stop wearing it?

P: I think the last time I wore it was probably last summer and wore it with like...with a belt on, but it's really annoying because you have to like, keep, tucking it and making sure it doesn't like, come out of the belt [mimes tucking into a belt with arms], so that's probably it, yeah, it just, slowly dying, I don't know how I'd fix the elastic, but I could do.

S: So before, before the elastic went how regularly did you wear it?

P: Erm, it wasn't like, I wouldn't wear it regularly, I think I'd just wear it for like, special days or like, birthdays and things like that. Yeah.

S: Right, so it was more of a special occasion getting dressed up...

P: Yeah,

S: Kind of skirt?

P: Mmhm, [nods], yeah, we'd have like...yeah, tropical parties and stuff like that, and then I'd wear it to that.

S: Yeah,

P: Mmhm,

S: And, so why do you still keep it, as it's broken and you can't wear it?

P: Erm, I think, I do intend to fix it,

S: Yeah,

P: I like it because...ah...it's just...it like...[pauses] covers up my legs in a nice way, I don't have to worry about legs on display but it's still really like cool and nice to wear, erm, so I think I still intend that I will wear it again, one day.

S: Yeah,

P: But yeah, [laughs],



S: Erm, how do you feel when you...when you're wearing it?

P: Erm, it's been a while, but I think I feel, yeah, sort of joyous, like the colours make me feel happy and yeah, a slightly like...it's this thing of like being on display like it's fun and it has kind of colours, and it's like, expressive but it's also like covering and it's not my body that is on show, it's this kind of big thing around it, yeah.

S: And what, what do you wear it with? What's the outfit that goes with it?

P: I would normally just wear like, a black top with it or something and maybe a really bright necklace, and I had an orange cardigan that was kind of this kind of orange [gestures to skirt] so I would wear it with that,

S: Oh yeah,

P: Ah! I also had this perfect, erm, headband that was also my Mum's and she didn't have it from the same time but it like matches it perfectly and it's all these like parrot like colours that just go...so I sometimes wear that in my hair as well. And that also smelt like my Mum!

S: Aw,

P: [Laughs] Im really like...such a Mummies girl...erm, yeah, that was nice, she let me borrow that as well. And I think that kept going missing, I would drop it on the floor on the way to somewhere and then find on the way back, it was like this magical little scarf.

S: And it kept coming back to you?

P: Yeah...yeah, yeah [laughs],

S: Have you still got that?

P: Yeah, yeah I do somewhere I think...I think so, yeah. I hope so.

S: And does this fit in with the rest of your personal style with your other clothes do you think?

P: Erm, erm...yeah, I think so, like, I enjoy big, bright things and then having something to, to tone it down with, mmm, and maybe more with like a coup...a few years ago, rather than right now, but yeah, I don't know, I don't think my style's changed that much but...I like big block colours, and yeah, against black or something like that.

S: Yeah,

P: Yeah, I think so, it's maybe slightly on the wilder side of what I would wear now,

S: Mmm, and when did it become thought of as er, special or treasured?

P: Erm, I think as soon as I found it I was like 'Oh wow, I've like, hit the jackpot, I love this' instantly, yeah.

S: Ok great, can you tell me about the other garment?

P: Mmm, yeah this one, um, is, like er, it's a dress I found in a charity shop in Camberwell, in the Cancer Research, and it is...yeah, from Toast and it has pockets...

S: Ooooh,

P: And, I really liked it when I found it, and it's quite like, clingy, but, I...yeah, it's comfy, it feels like, quite smart for me [laughs], um, and also I really love yellow and blue together at the time...I realize I'm also wearing yellow and blue right now as well [laughs]!

S: [Laughs],

P: Yeah, my opinion of the colour has changed since I got it and I now feel like it's a bit school uniformy, but, I mean, I'm wearing quite similar, but this blue and this yellow [gestures to the clothes she's wearing], they're not really the same [holds dress next to her outfit to illustrate].

S: No,

P: You see that's more of a bright yellow [the stripe on the dress] and that's more of a mustard yellow [the yellow on her trousers], and that's more green [the blue of the dress] anyway [laughs], so this is the second...the second out...the second one, um, yeah.

S: How much did this one cost from the charity shop?

P: I think it cost like, a fiver or something, maybe four? It was a while ago though that I bought it.

S: And do you still wear this one?

P: Yeah, occasionally I will, I'll probably...I normally wear like a black jumper over the top or something, yeah, mmhmm.

S: What kind of, what kind of events do you wear that to? Or what sort of occasions?

P: Er, I sometimes wear it to work, like the main reason why I chose it was because I wore it on the day that, erm, me and Shane got together, and it, it just seemed like,

more than the like, actual dress itself, it's more like the...significance of that day. We'd been friends for like 15 years beforehand,

S: Aw,

P: And like so... and I've known him since high school, and then we have been like, we went to Kingston and we were friends there, we've known each other for a very long time and been really, really good friends. And then, er, yeah we went on a family holiday with my family to Cornwall and then after that, it was like...oh, we...we had to like, share a room and it was very intense and then, er, we went to see an exhibition together in a couple of weeks time and we both like dressed up [laughs]!

S: Oh,

P: And it was like...oh, something's changed now, this isn't really just us hanging out, like it normally would be, and I wore this and he wore a shirt, like a blue shirt, and it's kind of the same kind of royal blue, and I was just...it was really funny [laughs]!

S: [Laughs]

P: Just like, oh! Peacocking, serial peacocking, [laughs], yeah, it's funny. And we um, yeah we went to this Robert Crumb show it...it was nice, and um, yeah, had a fun day, met someone co-incidentally on the bus and ended up going out dancing and then...the rest is history [laughs]!

S: Awww,

P: So yeah, it reminds me of that. So I think I like wear it, on something like that or other things just at work or with family, whatever.

S: So is it worn quite regularly then? Or not super regularly?

P: Not super regularly, once in a while,

S: Yeah,

P: And I feel like I have to be...it's quite on show, it like, clings to my bum [laughs], so it's not something that I would wear like, if I wasn't already feeling quite like, confident, and just like 'Yeah, my bum's really big!' [laughs]. It also like sags at the tummy so I think [puts her hands to her waist], I like, I normally wear things that kind of tuck here [holds her waist] because my waist is like, small and then my thighs are huge, so to wear something that hangs off the waist and then clings on my bum is just not something I would normally go for, but...yeah, um.

S: But do you think it looks nice still?

P: Yeah,

S: When you wear it?

P: Yeah, I think so, yeah,

S: Like, is it quite a flattering cut, because you've described it and...it sounds like it could be? Hold it up, let me see,

P: [Holds up dress] Yeah, it's quite, just like...

S: What's the shape of it?

P: Flat there, it goes out a bit, but...

S: Oooh,

P: See it doesn't really like tightly fit the body,

S: Yeah,

P: And it's got these weird arrows at the sides [laughs], I don't know.

S: So is it kind of like a bit fitted and a bit loose at the same?

P: Yeah, it like, it like comes out here [puts hands in pockets at the lower waist], and it clings all the way here [pulls dress over legs to show],

S: Oh,

P: So it depends on what your version of flattering is [laughs]!

S: It must be flattering?

P: Yeah maybe, [laughs]. But it's stretchy, it's comfy.

S: Yeah. It's really thick, the fabric.

P: Yeah, it's quite warm, it's too warm to go dancing in [laughs].

S: As you discovered?

P: Yeah, [laughs]!

S: So what like, do you wear shoes or tights or what does, what does it go with?

P: Yeah, I would normally wear black tights, probably with it, and some shoes [laughs], yeah, I have some Doc Marten boots, I might wear them with that, wear it with that. Or, yeah, um, I don't have many shoes so I think I would just wear...I have trainers or boots or yeah, that's basically it.

S: And, how do you feel when you're wearing it?

P: Um, I think it varies on the time, like I don't always feel blissed out but um, er, yeah I don't know, I think I've been very negative today, I think in general I feel like comfy and myself, and mm, maybe a little bit aware of everything being on show [smiles].

S: Yeah,

P: Yeah,

S: Yeah, so why do you think you chose to wear it, to the, to the date?

P: Yeah...well...hmm...I think, it's like probably one of the more smarter things I had...mmm, yeah. And I guess at that time maybe it made me feel like confident and that I was dressing up and like that kind of putting on a character when you put clothes on, I think that's what I did then, mmm, yeah.

S: And how do you feel about the dress now?

P: Erm, I feel like right now....like, my opinion of it is quite low [laughs],

S: [laughs] Oh no, you've been a bit mean about it?

P: Yeah I have, I have! I think maybe I'm trying not to be sentimental [laughs], erm, I like it, I think it would be...yeah, hard to get rid of, erm, and yeah, occasionally I'll wear it and I...I still enjoy wearing it.

S: And does this one fit with your personal style?

P: Erm, again I find that quite difficult, like, the concept of that [personal style], but yeah, I think it does, it's like, colourful and I wear lots of stripes.

S: Yeah, the same colours as what you're wearing,

P: Exactly, yeah, it's quite similar in lots of ways, but I think that, that is interesting that I just like, as soon as it becomes about identity or like, you asserting something about 'yourself' [makes inverted commas with fingers] through your choices, I find it really like...'Ooooh, I don't know like...I'm not making any...I don't wanna many any...um, like assertions about that, but I think that's mainly my...I don't know, my....I...it's problems with those things, like, the idea of a solid self, and...um, yeah...that I find quite difficult, yeah.

S: So do you worry that people will assume the kind of person you are depending on what you're wearing?

P: Yeah, yeah, I think that's definitely a thing, um, I think, I guess you just make yourself vulnerable when you make those assertions or make those like...yeah, put that out there of what it is,

S: Mmm,

P: And I think that's probably why I've been...yeah, going more towards like, ah just keep it black and grey and like, don't have to show everything all the time, um, yeah.

S: So, are you reluctant to label or describe your style as in were in that case?

P: Mmm, I just find it uncomfortable, I don't...yeah, I don't know how to...but...yeah, I think it's something I'm not particularly...I don't really read about fashion, I don't really know anything about it, it's not, that I'm not interested and I love other people's clothes, and I'm like interested in the objects themselves but the like, mmmm...the stuff around it [fashion] the like, mythology around it I find...I just like...it's like 'Oh, that's for someone else, that's really not for me.'

S: Yeah,

P: Yeah, mmm.

S: Ok so what...what are...what's the future for both of the items?

P: Erm, this one [Blue and yellow stripy dress] will stay in my wardrobe and will sometimes get worn and this one [floral skirt] it will...I should get it fixed, maybe I'll take it to a tailor or something...how can, where can I go to get elastic? Someone to sort out the elastic? I don't even know how I'd start to do that?

S: Er, the dry cleaners on Love Walk, by the Love Walk café, are pretty good, I mean they put buttons back on and stuff they always know, and they send stuff...

P: Oh cool, nice,

S: Um, I've had someone take in seams of dress, which was, like, this big [gestures to show too big] I had to get them to take it in, because I'd been wearing it, like, big with a belt,

P: Yeah,

S: And I was like 'I should just get it taken in' so yeah, so any...any of the drycleaners you can just take it in and show them and they'll...they'll help you I think.

P: Yeah, that's good, I'll do that. Either that or I'll take it to my Mum and she'll be like 'Oooh, no, it's gonna be...it's gonna be really hard!' [laughs],

S: Yeah,

P: But I'll take it to a professional, yeah, yeah.

S: Erm, are you planning on...how long are you planning on keeping the garments?

P: Mmmm,

S: Do you think you'll throw them away or get rid of them ever?

P: Erm, um...I haven't planned that far ahead [laughs], um, I'm sure, at some point, I will be able to let go of them, but I don't feel like that right now...but yeah, I think it's healthy to like, this is another thing Marie Kondo says, but I do agree, is like, to let something go and have it's second life elsewhere, and like, that by keeping something in the wardrobe unused you're like, stopping it from going on to do other things, so I quite like that. So at some point I'll er, if they don't bring me joy anymore...maybe this one's [yellow and blue stripy dress] getting there [laughs], no! No, no, it's fine, I just need to wear it to a party again. But, um, yeah, if at some point it gets there, then I'll let them go [laughs].

S: Erm, is there a garment that you wished you still had that would be a treasured garment if you still had it? So is there anything you've lost or....

P: Erm, I did have a silver sequined dress that, it had a kind of diamond of different shades of like black, silver, and white, and grey sequins that was just...I remember it being absolutely amazing and we had like a...like a moon themed costume party and I was like 'Oh, where's that dress? Where's that dress?' And I'd cleared it out in, in my big clear out [laughs].

S: Oh, oh no [laughs],

P: I was like, 'I'm never gonna need this!' Also, it was very like tight and like absolutely like skimpy so I think I got rid of it, thinking like "I'll never need this again!" and then I regretted that. Yeah, so anything that could be like potential costume stuff, I wish I kept.

S: Yeah,

P: Erm, but my life is fine, I made a different costume that was great for that party so, it's all good [laughs].

S: Cool, and can you show me where the treasured garments are stored?

P: Yeah, sure,

S: Are they stored with the rest of your clothes?

P: Yeah they are, um, my bedroom's really messy and my wardrobe is open but...it's ok, I'll show you.

S: It's ok, I see worse, everyday, when I walk into my own bedroom,

P: You haven't seen it yet, it might be terrible!

S: No, I know.

P: [laughs] right, here we go, the light in here's really bad...

S: Oh yeah, it's kind of dim,

P: Yeah, it's really dim, because we never have the light on, I've got this lamp, but it doesn't really help! It's an alarm that fades out when you sleep, but it's not great, do you want other lighting in here?

S: No, it's fine,

P: Ok, good, so yeah, I'll just close the drawer where the jumpers live and they never sit in there properly,

S: That is a huge drawer, it's so deep!

P: It's really big yeah,

S: It is,

P: Fits a lot of stuff, I think I use my wardrobe as like a hiding place for stuff as well...there's like towels here, there's a hot water bottle...

S: [Laughs],

P: It's quite chaotic, and because it's hard to close, it stays open quite a lot. And also [someone walks in the front door]...Hello, hi! I'm going to shut you out. I also inherited the actual wardrobe from my brother so a lot of the furniture is inherited as well as the clothes [laughs]! [Opens wardrobe] And then yes, this is all the patterns and the colours, yeah so, there's things like this [pulls out patterned dress] that I think, 'ah, I'll definitely wear that and then when it comes to it I don't, I don't really go for it'.

S: Yeah,

P: So the treasured garments...



S: Do they live, where do they live?

P: I was keeping them in like, height order for a while but it's kind of...that order has collapsed.

S: So is it still a little bit in height order or...

P: Yeah, a little bit, but now there's like this load of stuff down here [gestures to bottom of wardrobe] there's like shoes, there's different stuff, but, like, life...a load of life drawings that I don't know what to do with [laughs]...just like, 'push it away' which is not, which wasn't my intention, erm, yes.

S: So they're both stored in your regular wardrobe with your other clothes?

P: Yeah, yeah, with their friends. This one [floral skirt] is quite long so it would go on the left, maybe right over here [hangs skirt up in far left hand side of wardrobe]. The idea was that it gives you an upward feeling,

S: Aaaah,

P: Like a graph going up, like aaaah [laughs],

S: Is that also inspired by Marie Kondo?

P: Yeah, sorry [laughs]! Yep, all my research, all my er, wardrobe philosophy comes from her [laughs]. Yeah, it goes on a thing [puts blue and yellow stripy dress on a coat hanger] and this one goes, also quite far this way [to the left of the wardrobe], maybe they can sit together. I am quite into folding things and making things neat in like drawers and shelves but yeah, this is [the hanging section of her wardrobe] not very neat.

S: I think it is pretty neat,

P: Do you reckon?

S: Yeah,

P: Oh thanks. Yeah, it's this problem area [gestures to bottom of wardrobe] that I need to sort out,

S: Everyone's got a hiding space for stuff,

P: Yeah, you need it, you need it! Do you still want them out?

S: Um, I'll need the other one out in a minute but...um, we're nearly done with this part so...

P: Ok, cool.

S: Yeah, then it's just, is there anything else you'd like to...oh! That's what I was going to ask you, out of the two, which one...which one do you like more?

P: Erm, I think today, the skirt, I think the colourful skirt, yeah, yeah.

S: You said 'today' do you think that would change or?

P: Yeah maybe, yeah, I, I mean, I don't really wear the skirt much so I guess on a day when I'm like getting ready for work I might think that I can get away with this stripy dress,

S: Yeah,

P: And not with a really crazy bright skirt, although I'm sure no one would mind if I did wear that to work, but yeah.

S: Do you have anything else to add about your items, or anything about clothes or fashion or shopping?

P: I think we've covered it all, yeah, I feel like I'm going away from this thinking I should try and be more positive about it all because it's just fun and it's really nice to like choose fabrics and like the feel of things, and like the things that I really love and use all the time do bring me some joy so I should just worry less about it [laughs] yeah.

S: Ok, great, thank you very much,

P: Thank you.

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